



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O  
**ŌTOROHANGA**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Open Agenda

**ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

31 March 2026

**Notice is hereby given** that an ordinary meeting of the Ōtorohanga District Council will be held in Waikōwhitiwhiti (Council Chambers), Ōtorohanga District Council, 17 Maniapoto Street, Ōtorohanga on Tuesday, 31 March 2026 commencing at 10.00am.

Tanya Winter, Chief Executive

25 March 2026

## **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AGENDA**

### **Ōtorohanga District Council membership**

Chairperson	Mayor Rodney Dow
Deputy Chairperson/Ōtorohanga Councillor	Deputy Mayor Katrina Christison
Kāwhia Tihiroa Councillor	Jo Butcher
Kāwhia Tihiroa Councillor	Kit Jeffries
Kio Kio Korakonui Councillor	Andrew Barker
Ōtorohanga Councillor	Tayla Barclay
Rangiātea Councillor	Tennille Kete
Rangiātea Councillor	Jaimee Tamaki
Waipā Councillor	Michael Woodward
Wharepūhanga Councillor	Shane Carr

All attendees at this meeting are advised that the meeting will be electronically recorded (audio and video) for the purpose of webcasting to the ŌDC's YouTube channel. Every care will be taken to maintain individuals' privacy however attendees are advised they may be recorded as part of the general meeting proceedings.

<b>Opening formalities</b>	<b>Ngā tikanga mihimihi</b>	
Opening prayer/reflection/words of wisdom	Karakia/huitao/whakataukī	5
Apologies	Ngā hōnea	5
Public forum	Hui tūmatanui	5
Late items	Ngā take tōmuri	5
Declaration of conflict of interest	Te whakapuakanga pānga taharua	6
Confirmation of minutes	Te whakaū i ngā meneti	6
Receipt of Minutes	Te rironga o ngā meneti	18
Mayor Dow's verbal report	Te pūrongo ā-waha a te kahika	18

<b>Information only reports</b>	<b>Ngā pūrongo mōhiohio anake</b>	
Item 27 February 2026 Severe Weather Event – Recovery March 2026 update		19

<b>Decision reports</b>	<b>Ngā pūrongo whakatau</b>	
Item 28 Funding of Weather Event Recovery		44
Item 29 February Weather Event: Affected Dwellings Consenting		48
Item 30 Waikato Triennial Agreement for the 2025–2028 triennium		56
Item 31 Simplifying Local Government Proposal – Retrospective Endorsement of Submission		70

<b>Information only reports</b>	<b>Ngā pūrongo mōhiohio anake</b>	
Item 32 Ōtorohanga District Environmental Scan 2026		82
Item 33 Finance Report to 28 February 2026		143

<b>Other business</b>		<b>Ētahi atu take</b>	
Councillor updates		Ngā kōrero hou a ngā Kaikaunihera	150
Resolution Register		Rēhita tatūnga	150

<b>Public excluded</b>		<b>Take matatapu</b>	
Item 34	Resolution to exclude the public for Item PE5		153

<b>Closing formalities</b>		<b>Ngā tikanga whakakapi</b>	
Closing prayer/reflection/words of wisdom		Karakia/huritao/whakataukī	156

<b>Workshops</b>		<b>Hui awheawhe</b>	
1	Waikato Water Limited		Open to the public
2	Aotea Seawall		Public not permitted
3	Climate Adaptation Plan		Open to the public
4	Annual Plan update		Open to the public
5	Monthly discussion with the Chief Executive		Public not permitted

This Open Agenda was prepared by Manager Governance, Kaia King and approved for distribution by Chief Executive, Tanya Winter on 25 March 2026.

**Commencement of meeting****Te tīmatanga o te hui**

The Chairperson will confirm the livestream to YouTube is active then declare the meeting open.

**Opening prayer/reflection/words of wisdom****Karakia/huitao/whakataukī**

The Chairperson will invite a member to provide opening words and/or prayer/karakia.

**Apologies****Ngā hōnea**

A Member who does not have leave of absence may tender an apology should they be absent from all or part of a meeting. The meeting may accept or decline any apologies. For clarification, the acceptance of a Member's apology constitutes a grant of 'leave of absence' for that specific meeting(s).

Should an apology be received, the following is recommended: *That Ōtorohanga District Council receive and accept the apology from ... for ... (non-attendance, early departure, late arrival).*

**Public forum****Hui tūmatanui**

Public forums are designed to enable members of the public to bring matters, not necessarily on the meeting's agenda, to the attention of Council. Requests to attend the public forum must be made to on the form available on ŌDC's website: [otodc.govt.nz/about-council/meetings/speak-at-public-forum](https://otodc.govt.nz/about-council/meetings/speak-at-public-forum). Alternatively, please call 07 873 4000.

Speakers can speak for up to five (5) minutes. No more than two speakers can speak on behalf of an organisation during a public forum. At the conclusion of the presentation, elected members may ask questions of speakers. Questions are to be confined to obtaining information or clarification on matters raised by a speaker. Following the public forum, no debated or decisions will be made during the meeting on issues raised in the forum unless related to items already on the agenda.

**No members of the public have requested to speak.**

**Late items****Ngā take tōmuri**

Items not on the agenda for the meeting require a resolution under section 46A of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 stating the reasons why the item was not on the agenda and why it cannot be dealt with at a subsequent meeting on the basis of a full agenda item. It is important to

note that late items can only be dealt with when special circumstances exist and not as a means of avoiding or frustrating the requirements in the Act relating to notice, agendas, agenda format and content.

Should a late item be raised, the following recommendation is made: *That Ōtorohanga District Council accept the late item .... due to .... to be heard ....*

**Declaration of conflict of interest****Te whakapuakanga pānga taharua**

Members are reminded to stand aside from decision making when a conflict arises between their role as an elected member and any private or external interest they may have.

A conflict can exist where:

- The interest or relationship means you are biased; and/or
- Someone looking in from the outside could have reasonable grounds to think you might be biased.

Should any conflicts be declared, the following recommendation is made: *That Ōtorohanga District Council receive the declaration of a conflict of interest from .... for item ... and direct the conflict to be recorded in Ōtorohanga District Council's Conflicts of Interest Register.*

**Confirmation of minutes****Te whakaū i ngā meneti**

The unconfirmed Minutes of the previous ordinary meeting are on the following pages.

**Staff recommendation**

That Ōtorohanga District Council confirm as a true and correct record, the open Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2026.
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TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O  
**ŌTOROHANGA**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Open Minutes

## **ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

24 February 2026

Open Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Ōtorohanga District Council held in St David's Community Hall, corner Ranfurly and Turongo Streets, Ōtorohanga on Tuesday, 24 February 2026 commencing at 10.00am.

Tanya Winter, Chief Executive

9 March 2026

### Ōtorohanga District Council attendance

Chairperson	Mayor Rodney Dow	Attended
Deputy Chairperson/Ōtorohanga Councillor	Deputy Mayor Katrina Christison	Attended
Kāwhia Tihiroa Councillor	Jo Butcher	Attended
Kāwhia Tihiroa Councillor	Kit Jeffries	Attended
Kio Kio Korakonui Councillor	Andrew Barker	Attended
Ōtorohanga Councillor	Tayla Barclay	Attended
Rangiātea Councillor	Tennille Kete	Attended via Zoom
Rangiātea Councillor	Jaimee Tamaki	Apology
Waipā Councillor	Michael Woodward	Attended
Wharepūhanga Councillor	Shane Carr	Attended

### ŌDC's senior staff in attendance

Chief Executive	Tanya Winter	Attended
Group Manager Business Enablement	Graham Bunn	Attended
Group Manager Engineering & Assets	Mark Lewis	Attended
Group Manager Regulatory & Growth	Tony Quickfall	Apology
Group Manager Strategy & Community	Nardia Gower	Apology

<b>Opening formalities</b>	<b>Ngā tikanga mihimihi</b>	
Opening prayer/reflection/words of wisdom	Karakia/huitao/whakataukī	5
Apologies	Ngā hōnea	5
Public forum	Hui tūmatanui	5
Late items	Ngā take tōmuri	5
Declaration of conflict of interest	Te whakapuakanga pānga taharua	5
Confirmation of minutes	Te whakaū i ngā meneti	6
Receipt of Minutes	Te rironga o ngā meneti	6
Mayor Dow's verbal report	Te pūrongo ā-waha a te kahika	6

<b>Decision reports</b>	<b>Ngā pūrongo whakatau</b>	
Item 22 Report on the Proposed Road Name (Fern Lane) adjacent to 60 Kiokio Station Road, Ōtorohanga		7
Item 23 Application for Temporary Road Closures – ANZAC Day 2026 (Ōtorohanga & Kāwhia)		7
Item 24 Application for Temporary Road Closure – Ōtorohanga Fire Brigade 100-year event		8
Item 25 Council Contribution to Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund		8

<b>Information only reports</b>	<b>Ngā pūrongo mōhiohio anake</b>	
There are no reports.		

<b>Other business</b>	<b>Ētahi atu take</b>	
Councillor updates	Ngā kōrero hou a ngā Kaikaunihera	9
Resolution Register	Rēhita tatūnga	9

<b>Public excluded</b>	<b>Take matatapu</b>	
Item 26	Resolution to exclude the public for Item PE3 and Item PE4	10

<b>Closing formalities</b>	<b>Ngā tikanga whakakapi</b>	
Closing prayer/reflection/words of wisdom	Karakia/huritao/whakataukī	11

<b>Workshops</b>	<b>Hui awheawhe</b>	
1	Monthly discussion with the Chief Executive	Public not permitted

These Open Minutes were prepared by Manager Governance, Kaia King and approved for distribution by Chief Executive, Tanya Winter on 10 March 2026.

**Commencement of meeting****Te tīmatanga o te hui**

Mayor Dow declared the meeting open at 10.02am.

**Opening prayer/reflection/words of wisdom****Karakia/huitao/whakataukī**

Mayor Dow led the meeting in a recitation of the karakia outlined in the agenda.

**Apologies****Ngā hōnea**

Resolved C29: That Ōtorohanga District Council receive and accept the apology from Councillor Jaimee Tamaki for non-attendance.

Mayor Dow | Councillor Woodward

**Public forum****Hui tūmatanui**

No members of the public had requested to be heard.

**Late items****Ngā take tōmuri**

There were no late items.

**Declaration of conflict of interest****Te whakapuakanga pānga taharua**

Councillor Carr advised he was associated with the Returned Service Association which was part of the event. He confirmed his decision to remain in the Chambers and participate in the discussion but not the vote.

Resolved C30: That Ōtorohanga District Council receive the declaration of a conflict of interest from Councillor Shane Carr for 'Item 23 - Application for Temporary Road Closures: ANZAC Day 2026 (Ōtorohanga & Kāwhia)' and direct the conflict to be recorded in Ōtorohanga District Council's Conflicts of Interest Register. Application for Temporary Road Closures – ANZAC Day 2026 (Ōtorohanga & Kāwhia).

Mayor Dow | Councillor Barker

**Confirmation of minutes****Te whakaū i ngā meneti**

Resolved C31: That Ōtorohanga District Council confirm as a true and correct record, the open Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025.

Councillor Jeffries | Councillor Carr

**Receipt of Minutes****Te rironga o ngā meneti**

Resolved C32: That Ōtorohanga District Council

- a. **RECEIVE** the Confirmed Minutes of the meetings of the Ōtorohanga Community Board on 1 December 2025 on 4 December 2025.
- b. **RECEIVE** the Confirmed Minutes of the meetings of the Kāwhia Community Board on 4 December 2025.

Councillor Jeffries | Mayor Dow

**Mayor Dow's verbal report****Te pūrongo ā-waha a te kahika**

Mayor Dow attended the Elevate meeting, a reopening at the Ōtorohanga Primary School, and the Ōtorohanga Community Board meeting. He attended a meeting at the Ōtorohanga Kiwi House to discuss Provincial Growth Fund opportunities. He attended the Kāwhia Community Board meeting and met with Waitomo Mayor, John Robertson. He also met with this year's Tuia representative, To Manea.

Following the 13/14 February 2026 weather event, Mayor Dow was inundated with meetings from the Emergency Operations Centre, communities affected, media requests and more. He hosted both the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, Mark Mitchell, and the Member of Parliament for Taranaki-King Country, Barbara Kuriger.

Resolved C33: That Ōtorohanga District Council **RECEIVE** the verbal update from Mayor Rodney Dow.

Mayor Dow | Deputy Mayor Christison

## Decision reports

## Ngā pūrongo whakatau

## Item 22 Report on the Proposed Road Name (Fern Lane) adjacent to 60 Kiokio Station Road, Ōtorohanga

ŌDC's Robbie Whiteman, Manager Projects, outlined the report. In response to Deputy Mayor Christison's question regarding the recent flooding in the area, Mr Whiteman advised that flood risk would be considered as part of the building and consenting processes, and this could potentially influence minimum floor level requirements.

Resolved C34: That Ōtorohanga District Council **APPROVE** Fern Lane as the name of the new right of way adjacent to 60 Kiokio Station Road, Ōtorohanga.

Councillor Carr | Councillor Barclay

## Item 23 - Application for Temporary Road Closures – ANZAC Day 2026 (Ōtorohanga &amp; Kāwhia)

ŌDC's Paul Strange, Manager Roding, outlined the report. He noted there was one objection received. He advised the Kāwhia RSA had requested to amend the road closure to reduce community impacts. The intended route includes Pouewe Street from the intersection with Jervois Street to the Anglican Church. This would see the Jervois Street intersection have a partial closure, allowing traffic in and out of Kāwhia.

ŌDC's Kaia King, Manager Governance, advised the Ōtorohanga closure was being reassessed to reduce the length of the closure along Maniapoto Street. The proposed closure would be from the Turongo Street/Wahanui Crescent intersection, instead of the Te Kanawa Street/Pine Street intersection. Ms King advised a health and safety review was being undertaken and the option was still under evaluation.

Resolved C35: That Ōtorohanga District Council:

- a. **APPROVE** the Temporary Road Closures, in accordance with Sections 319(h) and 342, and Section 11 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974, of Maniapoto Street SH 3 (from SH31/3 to intersection of Huiputea Drive), Kakamutu Road (from SH3 to Turongo Street), Gradara Avenue (from Kakamutu Street to Summit Drive), in Ōtorohanga on 25 April 2026 between 4.00am and 1.00pm. Noting this will also affect traffic on SH3, SH31, Turongo Street, Kakamutu Road, Tuhoro Street, Balance Street, Ranfurly Street, Huiputea Drive, Whittington Lane, Clarke Street, Wahanui Crescent, Gradara Avenue, Cowley Lane, Hunter Lane and Pine Street, and
- b. **APPROVE** the Temporary Road Closure, in accordance with Sections 319(h) and 342, and Section 11 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974, of Pouewe Street (from Jervois St intersection to past the Anglican church) in Kāwhia on 25 April 2026 between 12.00pm and 2.30pm. Note this allows traffic in and out of Kāwhia; and
- c. **AUTHORISE** public notification of the approved road closure before the event, as required by the Local Government Act 1974.

Mayor Dow | Councillor Jeffries

Councillor Carr abstained from the vote due to his declared conflict.

#### Item 24 - Application for Temporary Road Closure – Ōtorohanga Fire Brigade 100-year event

ŌDC's Paul Strange, Manager Roothing, outlined the report. He noted the applicant had liaised with Mitre 10 and NZ Police who would be affected by the closure.

Resolved C36: That the Ōtorohanga District Council:

- a. **APPROVE** the Temporary Road Closure for the Ōtorohanga Fire Brigade 100-year event, in accordance with Sections 319(h) and 342, and Section 11 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974, of Balance Street, on Saturday 7 March 2026 from 9.30am to 2.30pm.
- b. **AUTHORISE** public notification of the approved road closure before the event, as required by the Local Government Act 1974.

Councillor Carr | Deputy Mayor Christison

#### Item 25 – Council Contribution to Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund

ŌDC's Graham Bunn outlined the background to the establishment of the Fund. He advised that an application had been made to central Government for \$100,000 and no decision had yet been received. He explained the use of the General Reserve and advised that any unspent funds would be returned to the Reserve.

Councillor Jeffries queried the donations made to date and Mr O'Callaghan advised more than \$25,000 had been received. Mr O'Callaghan noted regular reporting to ŌDC's Risk and Assurance Committee on the Fund's expenditure was required, and should central Government funding be obtained, a final report would be lodged with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). In response to queries from Councillor Barclay and Councillor Barker, Mr O'Callaghan advised staff intended to ensure the three funding sources (donations, ŌDC budget, central Government funding) were kept separate for reporting purposes.

Resolved C37: That Ōtorohanga District Council **APPROVES** an amount of \$100,000 from the General Reserve Fund to the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund established in response to the 14 February 2026 flooding event, on the proviso that any money unspent after six months will be returned to the General Reserve Fund.

Councillor Jeffries | Councillor Woodward

**Information only reports****Ngā pūrongo mōhiohio anake**

There were no reports.

**Councillor updates****Ngā kōrero hou a ngā Kaikaunihera**

Councillor Kete attended the Kāwhia market day. Councillor Jeffries attended two Elected Members workshop and the Kāwhia Community Board meeting in February along with Councillor Butcher. He also attended an online Tourism workshop. He spoke on the Kāwhia Kai Festival which was also attended by Councillor Butcher and Deputy Mayor Christison.

Councillors Butcher, Barker and Jeffries attended the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting in December. Councillors Barclay and Butcher attended the Truck and Ute Show along with Mayor Dow and Deputy Mayor Christison. Councillors Barclay and Barker attended the pōwhiri for the new General Manager at the Ōtorohanga Kiwi House along with Mayor Dow and Deputy Mayor Christison.

Councillor Kete provided support to Mayor Dow during the Civil Defence Emergency Management event. She liaised with Rural Support, the Māori Wardens, Iwi and Hapu. Councillor Carr visited residents within the Wharepūhanga ward and Councillor Barker visited residents on Kio Kio Station Road which was heavily affected by the weather event. Councillor Barclay liaised with the Ōtorohanga Support House and Elevate and spoke to local businesses. She provided support to a displaced family.

Deputy Mayor Christison attended a pōwhiri for new staff at Waikeria Prison which included a tour of the prison. She attended an Elevate meeting, the Ōtorohanga Community Board meeting, Kāwhia Kai Festival, the Truck and Ute Show, Elected Member workshops and a Zoom meeting for Waikato Waters Limited.

**Acknowledgment**

Councillor Jeffries acknowledged the passing of John Kaati. Mr Kaati was a previous Deputy Chair of the Maniapoto Māori Trust Board and until recently a Trustee of Te Nehenehenui and had been a Waitomo District Councillor for six consecutive terms from 1986 through to 2004. He also acknowledged the unveiling for Edith Dockery, Member of the NZ Order of Merit, Justice of the Peace, Life Member of the Māori Womens Welfare League, and a previous member and Chairperson of the Kāwhia Community Board.

**Resolution Register****Rēhita tatūnga**

Resolved C38: That Ōtorohanga District Council confirm the removal of Resolutions C23 and C26 from the Register.

Councillor Woodward | Councillor Jeffries

**Resolution made in a public excluded session**

No Resolutions had been released.

**Public excluded**

**Take matatapu**

That the Ōtorohanga District Council exclude the public from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting confirming:

- a. This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 7 of that Act where a risk of prejudice is minimised by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public; and
- b. The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded and the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

<b>General subject of each matter to be considered</b>	<b>Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Item PE3: Amendment of Loan to Ōtorohanga Kiwi House Charitable Trust	Section 7(2)(b)(ii)	To protect where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.
Item PE4: Waikato Waters Limited – Deed of Guarantee	Section 7(2)(b)(ii)	To protect where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

Mayor Dow | Councillor Jeffries

The public were excluded from the meeting at 11.12am. Mayor Dow adjourned the meeting at 12.18pm and advised the meeting would be reconvened on **Tuesday, 3 March 2026** at 1pm. Mayor Dow reconvened the meeting at 1.03pm on Tuesday, 3 March 2026. The public were readmitted to the meeting at 1.48pm.

**Closing prayer/reflection/words of wisdom**

**Karakia/huritao/whakatauki**

Councillor Carr led the meeting in a recitation of the karakia provided in the agenda.

**Meeting closure**

**Katinga o te hui**

Mayor Dow declared the meeting closed at 1.51pm.

**Receipt of Minutes****Te rironga o ngā meneti**

The March meetings of the Ōtorohanga Community Board and the Kāwhia Community Board were cancelled due to the 13/14 February weather event. The confirmed Minutes from the February meetings will be presented at the next meeting.

**Mayor Dow's verbal report****Te pūrongo ā-waha a te kahika**

Mayor Dow will provide a verbal update at the meeting on his activities as Mayor since the last meeting.

**Staff recommendation**

That Ōtorohanga District Council receive the verbal update from Mayor Rodney Dow.

**Information only report****Ngā pūrongo mōhiohio anake**

**DISCLAIMER:** The reports attached to this Open Agenda set out recommendations and suggested resolutions only. Those recommendations and suggested resolutions DO NOT represent Ōtorohanga District Council policy until such time as they might be adopted by formal resolution. This Open Agenda may be subject to amendment either by the addition or withdrawal of items contained therein.

**Item 27** February 2026 Severe Weather Event – Recovery March 2026 update

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Nardia Gower, Recovery Manager/Group Manager Strategy and Community

**Type** **INFORMATION REPORT**

**Date** 31 March 2026



## 1. Purpose | Te kaupapa

1.1. To provide a high-level update on the impacts of the February 2026 severe weather event, the transition from response to recovery, the current recovery position, and the main recovery challenges for Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) across the four recovery sectors.

## 2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua

- 2.1. The February 2026 severe weather event had a significant impact on households, infrastructure, rural communities and the natural environment across parts of the Ōtorohanga and Waipā districts. The initial response phase (which was a combined ŌDC and Waipā District Council response) has now transitioned into recovery, with a Transition to Recovery notice signed on 25 February 2026 and transition powers subsequently extended to support the continued management of recovery activity.
- 2.2. Recovery has been split with each Council running their own individual recovery process. ŌDC’s recovery is a coordinated, collaborative programme of work focused on supporting the immediate, medium-term and long-term holistic regeneration and enhancement of communities, including the restoration of essential services, support for community wellbeing, enabling economic recovery, addressing impacts on the natural and built environments, reducing future hazard risk where possible, and strengthening resilience over time where feasible and affordable to do so.
- 2.3. Current information indicates that 116 people remain displaced, with 22 yellow placards and 35 white placards still in place. While the number of displaced people has reduced from the initial emergency phase, the psychosocial impacts on affected households are increasing as uncertainty, housing disruption and fatigue continue. The most significant current challenges for recovery sit within the built, community and natural sectors. By comparison, while there has been disruption to agribusiness and rural production, the district has been fortunate to experience relatively limited broader economic impact to date.
- 2.4. In the built sector, one of the key current issues is the need to balance support for affected homeowners to move forward with repairs and reinstatement decisions, while ensuring hazard and technical assessments are sufficiently advanced to provide a sound basis for those decisions. In the Kio Kio Station Road area, independent flood modelling has been commissioned to support owner, insurer,

regulatory, and recovery decision-making. At the same time, the Recovery Manager is working with National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to develop indicative response and recovery costs. The current signal from central government is that any financial assistance is more likely to come from existing appropriations held by the relevant ministry than through a new stand-alone funding package.

- 2.5. This report provides ŌDC with a high-level update on the current recovery position, the main challenges across the four recovery sectors, and the work underway to formalise recovery arrangements. This includes funding decisions being considered elsewhere in this agenda and the development of a draft Recovery Action Plan to be circulated to Councillors for feedback ahead of seeking endorsement in April.

### 3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi

That the Ōtorohanga District Council **RECEIVES** the report titled 'February 2026 Severe Weather Event – Recovery Update' from Nardia Gower, Recovery Manager.

### 4. Discussion | He kōrerorero

#### Background

- 4.1. The February 2026 severe weather event was a major weather emergency for the district. Early event information identified a 1-in-250-year localised flood event, around 170mm of rain in 24 hours, widespread road faults, bridge damage, telecommunications and power outages, impacts on marae and urupā, and significant disruption for rural households and production.
- 4.2. During the response phase, activity was coordinated through the Western Waikato CDEM Joint Emergency Operations Centre (ŌDC and Waipā District Council), supported by a multi-agency response. The response phase has now formally transitioned into recovery with each council running their own individual recovery.
- 4.3. A public workshop presentation on the February 2026 severe weather event recovery was presented to ŌDC on 10 March 2026. That presentation is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and is intended to provide additional background and context to the matters summarised in this update.

#### Transition from response to recovery

- 4.4. A Transition to Recovery notice was signed by Mayor Dow on 25 February 2026. The “transition” period confers certain statutory powers to the Recovery Manager during this period. Transition powers have since been extended for a further 28 days to ensure that remaining recovery issues can continue to be managed while longer-term arrangements are put in place. The extension reflects the continuing need for coordinated recovery leadership, the formalisation of governance and workstreams, and the ability to respond to issues that remain beyond business-as-usual processes, including placarded properties, land instability, access to affected sites, and ongoing multi-agency assessment and information-sharing.
- 4.5. Recovery, in this context, is a coordinated and collaborative programme of work that supports immediate, medium-term and long-term restoration and resilience for communities following an

emergency. It includes community, economic, built and environmental dimensions of recovery and recognises that recovery is not a single project, but an evolving programme likely to extend over months and, for some issues, longer.

### **Current recovery status**

- 4.6. ŌDC's recovery activity remains focused on supporting affected households and communities, while also progressing technical assessments, repair planning, funding discussions, and governance arrangements. As at the date of this report, 116 people remain displaced, with 22 yellow placards and 35 white placards still in place.
- 4.7. While these numbers have reduced from the initial emergency phase, the psychosocial impacts on affected households are becoming more pronounced as uncertainty, housing disruption, and fatigue continue.
- 4.8. ŌDC has also put in place dedicated recovery communications to support affected communities. This includes the "Our Road to Recovery | Tō Tātou Haerenga ki te Whakaoranga" webpage <https://engage.otodc.govt.nz/our-road-to-recovery> which provides a practical hub for residents and landowners seeking information about support, next steps, and recovery pathways relating to homes, land, roads, waterways, and wellbeing.
- 4.9. Mayor-led community in-person connection events have taken place with Mangati Rd and Phillips Ave residents, with a more formal community meeting held with affected residents in the Kio Kio Station Road area on 11 March 2026. Follow-up information sheets and frequently asked questions were circulated afterwards to help close the loop on matters raised, provide general guidance, and explain where further technical work is still required before more definitive answers can be given.

### **Recovery sectors and current challenges**

- 4.10. The recovery programme is being considered across four sectors: built, economic, community and natural. The main challenges for ŌDC in each sector are set out below.

#### **Built sector**

- 4.11. The built sector remains one of the most immediate areas of pressure for Recovery. The scale of initial disruption was significant, with 3 bridges and 25 roads closed across the district at the height of the event. Ongoing issues currently include 22 yellow and 35 white placarded homes, restoration of community facilities, localised three waters impacts, and waste issues. At the time of this report, roading and bridge remediation has been completed to a level that has restored access across all local roads, bridges, and state highways within the district boundaries, albeit with some ongoing limitations.
- 4.12. Current early infrastructure estimates identified through the recovery update are approximately \$3.8 million for roading, \$370,000 for three waters, and \$320,000 for community facilities. These figures remain indicative only and are subject to further assessment.
- 4.13. In the Kio Kio Station Road area, the hazard and recovery picture for affected properties is still being worked through. As reported elsewhere in the agenda affected dwellings are outside the River Hazard Zone in the Operative District Plan, but that the area is known to have flooded in the 2002 Weather

Bomb. To provide evidence based information as a basis for owner, insurer, regulatory, and recovery decision-making, an independent flood modelling assessment has been commissioned

- 4.14. The key challenges for ŌDC in the built sector are managing the tension between facilitating affected homeowners to progress repair and reinstatement decisions and ensuring that hazard assessments are completed to a standard that informs sound and defensible decision-making. In some locations, particularly where localised flooding occurred, questions from the communities remain about the perceived causes of the event (i.e. the actual rain impact, river management or undersized/blocked culverts) and the implications for future risk, and these matters are still being worked through. At this stage, ŌDC cannot provide certainty to affected homeowners, but can continue to be open about the actions underway, the areas of uncertainty that remain, and its commitment to keeping residents informed as the picture becomes clearer. It should also be noted that councils do not typically design infrastructure to a 1 in 250 year event, with design standards more typically in the order of 1 in 50 year events (for infrastructure) or 1 in 100 year events (for dwelling floor levels and stopbanks).

#### **Economic sector**

- 4.15. The economic sector has experienced disruption, particularly for agribusiness and rural production. Access interruptions, clean-up requirements, on-farm recovery costs and impacts such as milk dumping have all affected some parts of the district.
- 4.16. However, at a district-wide level, Ōtorohanga has been fortunate to avoid the level of economic disruption seen in some other recent weather events nationally. At this stage, the economic impacts appear more contained than the impacts being experienced in the built, community and natural sectors.
- 4.17. ŌDC's challenge in this sector is therefore less about direct economic intervention and more about supporting access restoration, sharing information, advocating where needed, and working alongside agencies whose existing mandates and budgets are more directly aligned to business and primary sector recovery.

#### **Community sector**

- 4.18. The community sector remains a major area of concern. While some households have transitioned out of emergency accommodation or temporary arrangements, 116 people remain displaced. There are still 22 yellow placards and 35 white placards in place, indicating ongoing uncertainty for a significant number of households.
- 4.19. The psychosocial impact on displaced families is increasing. Prolonged disruption to housing, uncertainty around timeframes, pressure on whānau networks, and the cumulative stress of the event are now becoming more visible recovery issues. Rural Support Trust, community outreach, and the Recovery Navigators/Case Managers continue to be important supports, but the strain on affected households is growing as recovery moves beyond the initial response phase.
- 4.20. Recovery Navigators/Case Managers are also supporting affected households to understand assessment outcomes, navigate regulatory processes, and connect with agencies that can assist with insurance and psychosocial support. This remains an important part of the recovery effort, particularly as displacement continues and pressures increase.

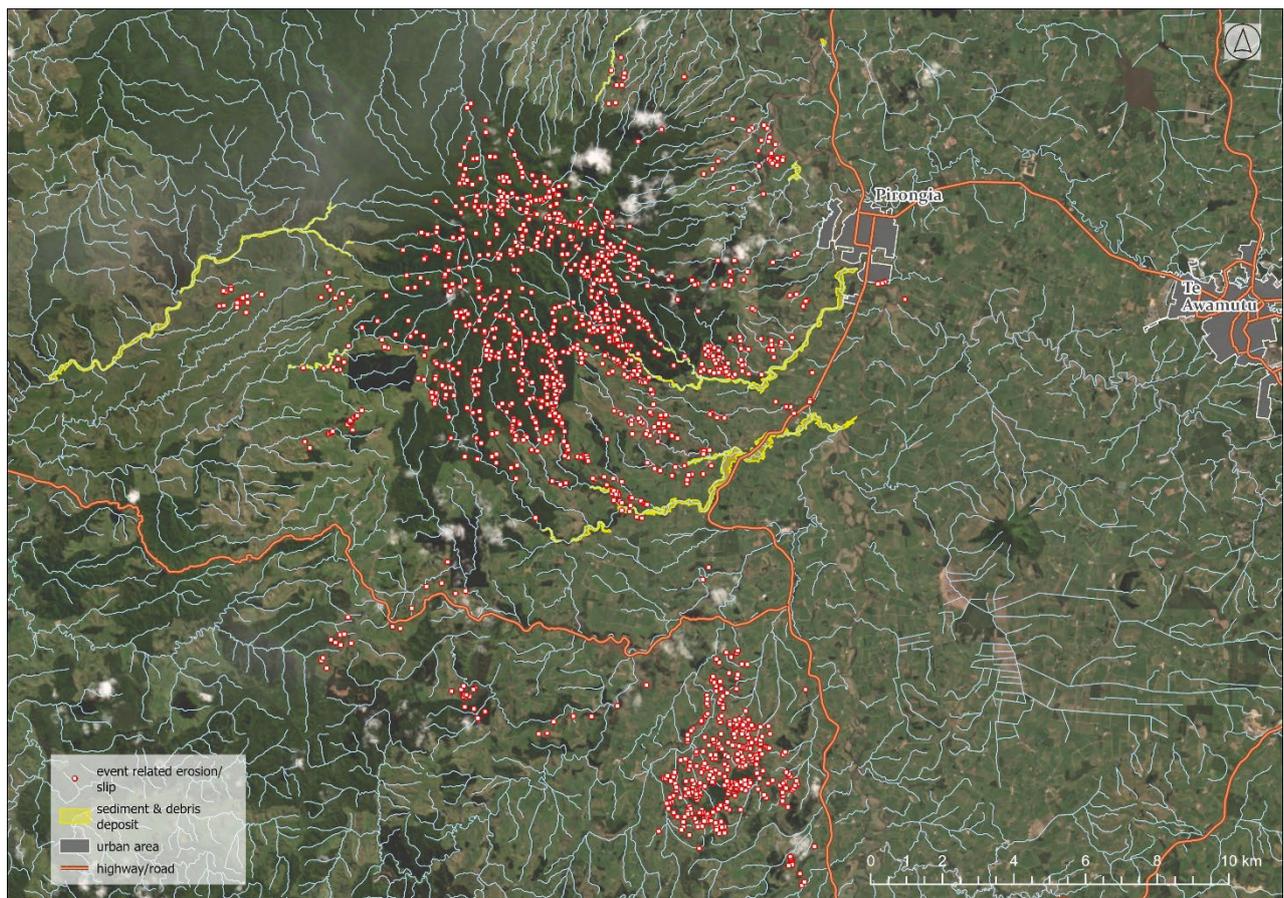
4.21. ŌDC’s challenge in this sector is to maintain visible coordination, support connection to the right agencies, keep elected members and communities informed, and ensure the human impacts of the event remain central to recovery decision-making.

**Natural sector**

4.22. The natural sector includes sediment and debris impacts, damage to waterways and land, and ongoing questions around land stability and safe access. These impacts have both environmental and practical consequences, particularly where they affect private land, rural access, drainage, and hazard exposure.

4.23. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) is the lead agency for the natural sector and is managing this body of work across both the Waipā and Ōtorohanga districts, recognising that catchments, waterways, and natural systems do not align to territorial boundaries. Within the Ōtorohanga district, response activity is underway across the Mangauika, Te Tahi Stream, Mangarewarewa Stream, Mangatutu, Mangaorongo, Ngakoahia, and shared Puniu and Mangawhero catchments. Current priorities remain debris and obstruction removal, channel reinstatement, and ongoing monitoring.

4.24. The inclusion of imagery below, supplied by WRC, shows slips on Pirongia maunga and illustrates the scale of natural sector damage reinforcing why this work is being managed at a catchment and cross-district level rather than as isolated site responses.



4.25. For ŌDC, the key challenges are maintaining visibility of the scale and likely duration of natural sector impacts within the district, coordinating effectively with WRC and central government agencies, and ensuring environmental and land stability issues are properly reflected in decisions about access, clean-up, recovery planning, and longer-term resilience. ŌDC also needs to recognise that some risks,

including debris movement, erosion, and land instability, remain dynamic and may change with further weather events.

**Recovery governance, funding and next steps**

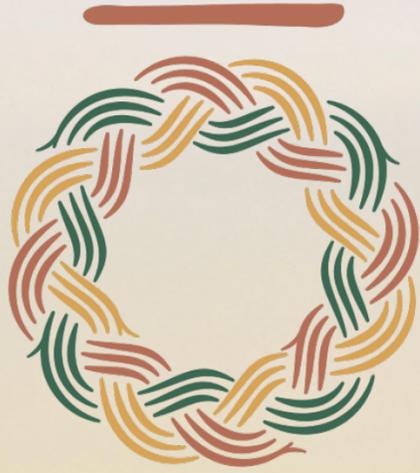
- 4.26. While operational coordination remains with the Recovery Manager and recovery team, Councillors continue to hold their normal governance and democratic accountability roles through ŌDC. As such regular updates on recovery progress will be provided.
- 4.27. The Recovery Manager is also working with NEMA to develop indicative response and recovery costs. At this stage, the indication from central government is that any financial assistance is more likely to be provided from current budgets held by the relevant ministry than through a new dedicated funding package.
- 4.28. ŌDC is also considering, elsewhere in this agenda, a separate report on the funding of weather event recovery costs. That report seeks approval for unbudgeted expenditure for the Recovery Office and for insurance deductibles associated with ŌDC’s asset damage. The proposed approach includes \$100,000 from the General Reserve Fund for the Recovery Office, together with internal loan funding for the \$100,000 material damage deductible and the \$250,000 infrastructure assets deductible. This is a significant step in establishing recovery as a funded programme of work, rather than solely an emergency response activity. Any central government contribution that may become available for Recovery Office costs would offset the General Reserve Fund contribution.
- 4.29. A draft Recovery Action Plan will be circulated to Councillors in the coming week to seek feedback ahead of being presented to ŌDC for endorsement at the April meeting. The plan is intended to operate as a living document, recognising that recovery activity is dynamic and that some actions may be completed before formal endorsement occurs. Ongoing implementation and any changes in priorities, actions, or status will continue to be captured through future reporting to ŌDC.

**Strategic observations**

- 4.30. At a strategic level, the recovery reinforces the importance of keeping a clear distinction between governance and operations. ŌDC’s role is not to manage every operational issue, but to maintain oversight, understand risks and trade-offs, support community confidence, and help ensure that recovery remains aligned with longer-term district wellbeing.
- 4.31. For Ōtorohanga, that means applying the limitations and powers of the Civil Defence Act; continuing to view recovery through the lens of people, place and partnerships: supporting whānau and communities, restoring infrastructure and the environment, and working closely with iwi, agencies and community partners to weave recovery and resilience together.

**5. Appendices | Ngā āpiti hanga**

Number	Title
1	Presentation - February 2026 severe weather event Recovery



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O  
ŌTOROHANGA  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



# February 2026 Severe Weather Event - RECOVERY

DATE: 10 March 2026

PRESENTER: Nardia Gower – Recovery Manager

# PURPOSE

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- Event overview
- Transition from Response to Recovery
- Recovery approach and priorities
- Governance role in Recovery



# WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU TODAY

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We're asking you to:

- Listen to the recovery approach
- Share observations from your communities
- Stay curious and ask questions

*We are not asking for any specific direction today*



# EVENT SNAPSHOT

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- 1 in 250 Flood event – 0.4% chance of happening in a year
- 170mm rain in 24 hours
- 21 Homes red/yellow stickers 37 White sticker
- 133 People displaced
- 21 Roads and 4 bridges closed
- 350-400 known road faults, 23 bridges damaged
- Urupa and Marae damaged
- 3 State Highways closed
- Power and telecommunication outages
- Rural production impacted – access, milk dumping
- Natural environments affected
- 3 Marae activated to support displaced  
(2 Ōtorohanga 1 Waitomo)





# RESPONSE PHASE

Response delivered through the  
**Western Waikato CDEM**

- Joint Emergency Operations Centre
- Multi-agency coordination
- Rapid decision making



# EOC SNAPSHOT

- 11 days - incl 6 nights, 3 @24 hours
- 417hrs of ŌDC staff time (excl. LT, water and roading staff)
- 180 individual council staff in EOC
  - ŌDC - 44 and Waipā - 36
  - Waitomo DC
  - Hamilton CC
  - Waikato DC
  - Sth Waikato DC
  - Matamata Piako DC
  - Taupo DC
  - Hauraki DC
  - Thames Coromandel DC
  - Waikato Regional Council
  - Taranaki Emergency Management



**Along with Māori Wardens, MPI, FENZ, Police, NZRT, NEMA, GEMO, NZ Fisheries, RST**

# FROM RESPONSE TO RECOVERY

Transition to Recovery notice signed **25 February 2026**

## WHAT IS RECOVERY?

A co-ordinated, collaborative programme of work to bring about immediate, medium term and long-term recovery and resilience for communities following an emergency

[recovery@otodc.govt.nz](mailto:recovery@otodc.govt.nz) – not a public facing email address



# WHAT RECOVERY LOOKS LIKE FOR ŌTOROHANGA

*Weaving the future together*

## People

Supporting whānau and communities through recovery

## Place

Restoring infrastructure, land and environment

## Partnerships

Working together with iwi, agencies and community



# RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

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Recovery will focus on:

- Restoring essential services
- Supporting community wellbeing
- Enabling economic recovery
- Protecting the natural environment
- Strengthening resilience where feasible



# WHAT RECOVERY MEANS FOR ŌDC



- ECONOMIC -**  
Agribusiness
- Rural production disruption
  - Increased farm recovery cost.



- BUILT**
- Yellow Placard homes
  - Roding incl. bridges
  - Waste-household and rural



- COMMUNITY**
- Psychosocial
  - Rural sector
  - Marae & Urupa
  - Household uncertainty
  - Displacement



- NATURAL**
- Sediment, debris and waterway impact
  - Land stability and track safety

# WHAT RECOVERY MIGHT COST

## What we know so far

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- Recovery Costs:

- We are still getting a picture of the damage and costs of remediation

- Early estimates are looking like this:

- Roothing - \$3.8 million

- Three Waters - \$370,000

- Community Facilities - \$320,000

- Recovery Office: budget required est \$100,000

- External Recovery Support: (potential)

- Insurance

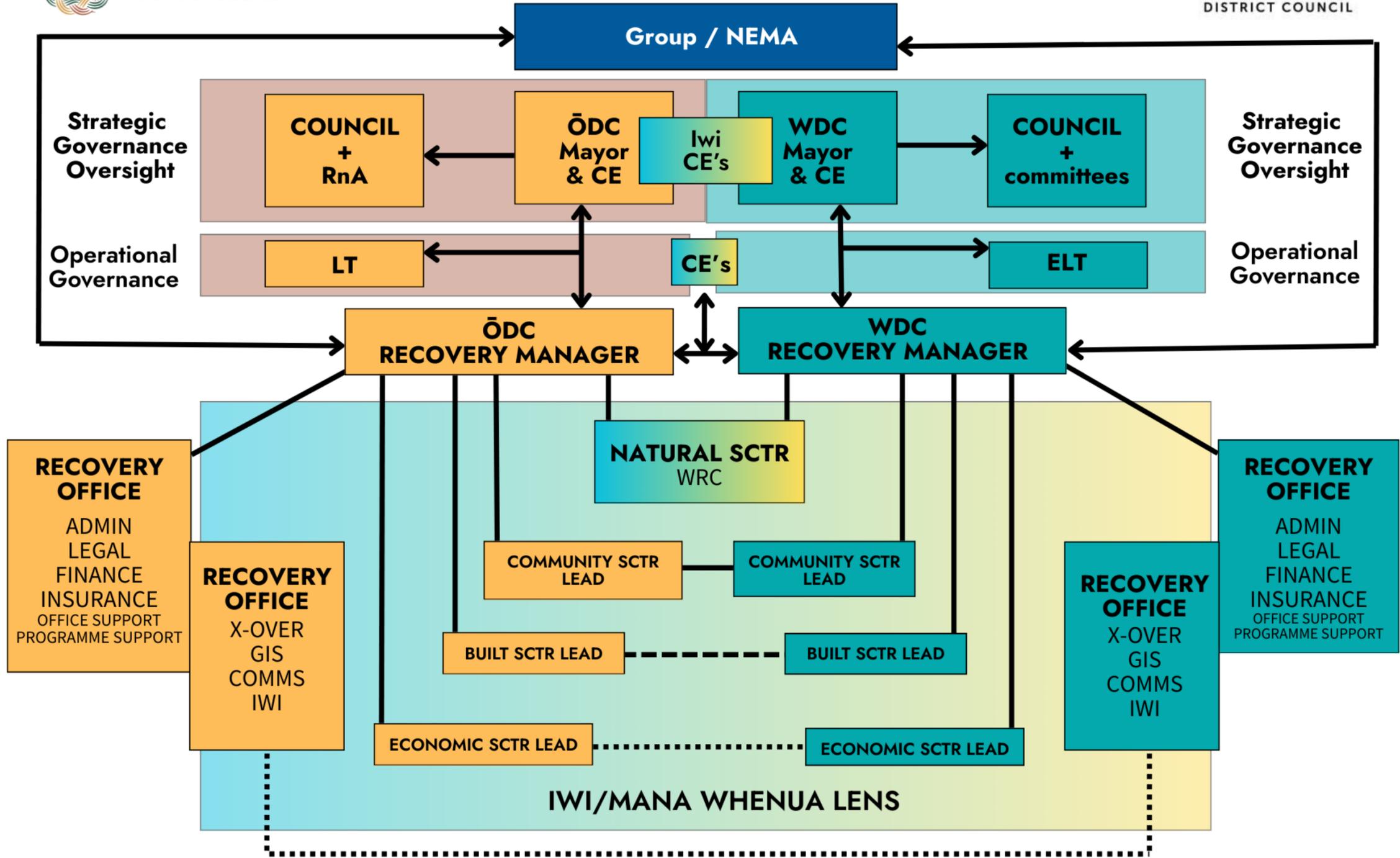
- NZTA subsidy

- Central govt support

Total Infrastructure \$4,490,000



# PROPOSED RECOVERY STRUCTURE



# RECOVERY GOVERNANCE AND ELECTED MEMBER ROLE

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## Recovery Governance Group

- Mayor / CE / iwi leadership
- Strategic oversight and cross-boundary/interest decisions

## Council specific

- Community leadership
- Democratic accountability
- Local insight into emerging issues



# RECOVERY WILL TAKE TIME

and is a shared effort

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## Things that can take time:

- Technical Assessments
- Contractor capacity
- Weather windows
- Partner programmes
- Funding decision



Progress will be visible. Some decisions will take longer.  
We will keep communities informed.

# KEY RECOVERY RISKS

- Capacity constraints
- Partner dependencies
- Funding pressures
- Changing community needs



# RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

## Community Action Plan table – intro

This table sets out the social and community recovery actions to support wellbeing, housing stability, access to essential services, and community support pathways. It includes actions to ensure people aren't missed as needs change over time.

**Note:** These actions form a live recovery programme and will be reviewed and updated as recovery progresses. Timeframes, dependencies and funding pathways are indicative and may change as impacts are confirmed, partner programmes develop, and priorities are refined.

Environment	Issue & consequence	Recovery action	Scope	What success looks like	Duration & milestones	Interdependencies	Agencies involved	Funding pathway (indicative)
Community	<b>Psychosocial impacts</b> (trauma, stress, fatigue) emerging after the event; clean-up longevity increases wellbeing pressure	Establish clear wellbeing support pathways and referral “front door”; targeted outreach in affected areas; consistent wellbeing messaging ( <i>per Comms &amp; Engagement Plan</i> )	<b>WŌ</b>	People know where to get help; wellbeing needs are identified early; support is accessible and culturally safe	<b>MED-LONG</b> \n• Confirm psychosocial support pathways and contacts \n• Targeted outreach plan agreed (place-based) \n• Monitor wellbeing trends and adjust supports \n• Review after next significant rainfall event	Access constraints; service capacity of providers; community connectivity; trust/confidence	Councils; <b>ŌSWHA</b> ; Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora (TBC); MSD; NGOs; iwi/Māori providers (where applicable)	<b>Partner-funded / co-funded (TBC)</b>

# EXAMPLES OF CURRENT RECOVERY ISSUES

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- Yellow-placarded homes – household support and hazard assessment
- Debris and sediment on farmland – working with WRC and partners
- Road access restoration – inspections and staged repairs



PATAI?

**Decision reports****Ngā pūrongo whakatau**

**DISCLAIMER:** The reports attached to this Open Agenda set out recommendations and suggested resolutions only. Those recommendations and suggested resolutions DO NOT represent Ōtorohanga District Council policy until such time as they might be adopted by formal resolution. This Open Agenda may be subject to amendment either by the addition or withdrawal of items contained therein.

**Item 28** Funding of Weather Event Recovery

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Brendan O’Callaghan, Manager Finance

**Type** **DECISION REPORT**

**Date** 31 March 2026



**1. Purpose | Te kaupapa**

1.1. To confirm the funding of the costs associated with recovery from the February 2026 weather event.

**2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua**

2.1. Costs have been identified that need to be funded to aid in the recovery process for the February weather event. Funding could be split between using reserve funds and internal loans, depending on the nature of the expense.

**3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi**

That Ōtorohanga District Council **APPROVES** the unbudgeted expenditure related to the recovery from the February weather event to the following levels:

- a) **\$100,000** for the funding of the recovery office to come from the General Reserve Fund; and,
- b) **\$100,000** of deductible for the material damage insurance claim, to be funded by internal loan(s) over the impacted activities; and,
- c) **\$250,000** deductible for the infrastructure assets insurance claim, to be funded by internal loan(s) over the impacted activities; and,
- d) That any government contribution that may be available for the recovery office costs be offset against the amount to be funded from the General Reserve Fund.

**4. Context | Horopaki**

4.1. In February 2026, a massive weather event struck the Ōtorohanga District, which caused flooding within Ōtorohanga township and surrounding areas, and lead to a number of people being displaced and damage to Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) owned assets.

4.2. A state of emergency was declared in the early hours of 14 February, and an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was established in the ODC offices to handle this event. Later that morning Waipa District Council also declared a state of emergency and the EOC became a joint centre for both Councils.

- 4.3. After the event was over and the EOC was stood down, a Recovery Office was created to handle the transition for the district back to a normal state. This Recovery Office is solely focussed on the Ōtorohanga District and will run as long as is needed.
- 4.4. At the same time, work was undertaken by staff to determine the extent of damage to ŌDC owned assets, and ŌDC's insurance brokers, AON Insurance, were in touch to offer their services in helping with the compiling and filing of information for insurance claims.

## **5. Discussion | He kōrerorero**

- 5.1. This event has given rise to unbudgeted costs, which will need to be funded by ŌDC.
- 5.2. Initial estimates for the cost of running the Recovery Office are \$100,000.
- 5.3. To fund these costs, it is proposed that ŌDC approves the use of funds from the General Reserve Fund. This fund has a current balance of \$877,742 after \$100,000 was used to put towards the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund.
- 5.4. While there is not currently any central government money available for funding the running of the recovery office, if any funding should become available, it would be intended to use that money in the first instance and reduce the amount of the General Reserve Fund money used for funding the Recovery Office. In the event that central government money becomes available after the fact, any money received will be transferred back into the General Reserve Fund.
- 5.5. For the damage to owned assets, ŌDC has two insurance policies that are being claimed against. The Material Damage policy covers all buildings and other assets, and the Infrastructure Policy covers all the piped assets related to 3 Waters.
- 5.6. The deductible for this one event is \$100,000 on the Material Damage policy, and \$250,000 on the Infrastructure Policy. These are the costs ŌDC will be required to cover, before insurance proceeds will cover the rest of the costs.
- 5.7. AON Insurance Brokers are assisting in preparing the claim and dealing with the loss adjustors. There is a cost involved in using them to provide this work, however our insurance policies include this service, so these costs will also be covered by the insurance claims.
- 5.8. For the funding of these, the proposal would be to loan fund these costs using internal loans. These loans would be on the same term as normal internal loans, being repaid over a 25-year period. The loans would be raised in the activities that the expenditure relates to.

## **6. Strategic Considerations | Ngā whai whakaarotanga**

### **Significance and engagement**

- 6.1. This decision has been assessed as of low to moderate significance. While it does not affect strategic assets or levels of service, it is of interest to some community members. ŌDC will inform the community of the decision through its usual communication channels.

**Mana whenua / Māori**

6.2. This decision has no direct impact on Māori, as it relates only to internal processes. It does not affect whenua, awa, moana, wāhi tapu or other taonga, and has no implications for iwi, hapū or marae.

**Strategic alignment**

6.3. This decision has no specific ties into strategic goals, as it relates to respond to external events that have had an impact on the community.

**Legal**

6.4. There are no legal issues with the decisions in this report.

**Financial**

6.5. There are no additional financial considerations over those raised previously in this report.

**Risk analysis**

6.6. The risk is assessed as being low, as the funding mechanisms used are consistent with funding methodology that has been used in the past to fund other projects.

**7. Options analysis | Tātari Kōwhiringa**

**Options summary of considerations**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
<b>Summary</b>	Agree to funding proposals	Agree to one proposal but not the other
<b>Advantages</b>	Ensures that funding is available to continue the recovery efforts that are already underway.	May identify alternatives ways to fund the particular cost.
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Forgoes potential interest earnings in the General Reserve Fund in the case of the Recovery Office and will have an impact on future rates increases for the loan funding of insurance deductibles.	Will require additional work and another report to ODC. May not identify any viable alternative funding methods. May cause delays in the implementation of the recovery processes.
	<b>Option 3</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	Disagree with both funding proposals	
<b>Advantages</b>	Allows the ability to explore additional funding sources.	
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Will require additional work and another report to ODC. May not identify any viable alternative funding methods. May cause delays in the implementation of the recovery processes.	

**Recommended option and rationale**

- 7.1. It is recommended to approve the proposals for funding both the Recovery Office and insurance claims (Option 1).
-

**Item 29** February Weather Event: Affected Dwellings Consenting

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Charlene Longden, Building Control Manager

**Type** **DECISION REPORT**

**Date** 31 March 2026



## 1. Purpose | Te kaupapa

1.1. To seek a decision on a waiver of consent fees for dwellings impacted by the 13 and 14 February 2026 weather event.

## 2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua

2.1. The February weather event has resulted in 22 dwellings remaining as “yellow stickered” (placarded) under the building assessment category. Yellow stickered dwellings require further remedial work and while owners can do work and retrieve personal effects, they are not cleared for living in due to minor structural and/or sanitation conditions. There are no red stickered buildings.

2.2. Ōtorohanga District Council’s (ŌDC) Recovery Office remains in a state of “transition”, meaning the Recovery Manager retains certain powers under the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act 2002. This includes powers to direct evacuations and to direct owners/occupants not to live in affected dwellings. The Recovery Office is working closely with impacted owners/occupiers and other agencies (e.g. insurers) as “navigators”, assisting them through the process of assessment and options around repair or relocation. This includes navigating through the regulatory building consent and, if required, resource consent process. The sequence of events underway is:

- a) Insurance assessments (underway).
- b) Flood risk modelling (underway).
- c) Owner/occupier/insurer decision whether to reinstate or relocate (decision pending - informed by flood assessment modelling, and modelling being undertaken by insurers of other non-flood affected properties).
- d) If reinstated, assessment of consenting requirements, and what support ŌDC can provide through the regulatory process (final step).

2.3 This report outlines the current state and seeks a decision on regulatory relief for affected owners by way of consent fee waiver or reduction.

### 3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi

That Otorohanga District Council:

- a) **NOTE** the process and timeframes for dwellings affected by the February weather event; and,
- b) **WAIVE** all building and (if required) resource consent fees for yellow stickered dwellings in full, where no other funding source is available to cover the fees (e.g. insurance), to a maximum of \$30,000.
- c) **ACKNOWLEDGE** that this is unbudgeted and will result in a reduced revenue in the Building Control cost centre.

### 4. Context | Horopaki

4.1. The weather event on 13 and 14 February 2026 had significant, but localised impacts on a number of dwellings. At the time of preparing the report the following dwellings remain impacted:

#### Flood and overland damaged

- 13 yellow
- 28 white

#### Damage or risk from slips or slumps

- 9 yellow
- 7 white

#### Total:

- 22 yellow
- 35 white

4.2. There are no red stickered dwellings.

4.3. Yellow stickered dwellings are restricted access. The building may be entered for repairs or retrieval, but cannot be lived in.

4.4. White stickered dwellings can be used and occupied, but the sticker denotes that hidden issues may still exist.

4.5. The entire district has been “designated” as a building area with MBIE, which means the stickers must be reviewed every 90 days from the assessment date. They can remain in force for up to 3 years and may be extended for a further 3 years (i.e. 6 years maximum duration).

4.6. Recovery Office staff have met with residents of Kio Kio Station Road and are working alongside all affected owners / occupiers in a “navigation role”, to guide them through the process and steps. Of the affected dwellings, our understanding is that only 1 property out of 22 does not have insurance and are working through options with their insurers.

4.7. In terms of known hazards:

- a) The affected dwellings in the Kio Kio Station Rd area are located outside of the River Hazard Zone, as identified in the Ōtorohanga District Planning Maps (Operative 2013). Notwithstanding, the affected portion of Kio Kio Station Road and Cherry Lane lies within an area that is known to have flooded during the 2002 'Weather Bomb' according to the Waikato Regional Council Hazard Portal (2026).
  - b) Phillips Rd affected dwellings are located outside of the River Hazard Zone, as identified in the Ōtorohanga District Plan. Notwithstanding, the affected portion of Phillips Avenue lies within an area that is susceptible to flooding during a 1 in 100-year storm event (1% AEP) and has known to have flooded during the 2002 'Weather Bomb' according to the Waikato Regional Council Hazard Portal (2026)
  - c) Mountain View Rd affected dwellings are not located in a known hazard area, as identified in the Ōtorohanga District Plan.
- 4.8. Staff have commissioned an independent flood modelling assessment to understand the scale of the event and the flood risk to affected properties, taking into account the event impacts and best-estimate climate change forecasting. This modelling will provide a defensible, risk-based assessment to inform decisions by insurers and owners/occupiers around their options (i.e. repair, reinstate or relocate). This decision lies with the owner/occupier and ŌDC is unable to make any recommendations nor give advice.
- 4.9. In respect of consent requirements, this will be "case by case" depending in each individual dwelling. Some works may be exempt from building consent, while more substantive work may require building consent. Resource consent is not required for non-structural repairs, or if the dwelling is constructed 0.5m above the level of the 1% "Annual Exceedance Probability" event (i.e. re-build). However, resource (land use) consent could *potentially* be required for the structural reinstatement or replacement work to a dwelling. The flood modelling may also trigger the need to review consent conditions around, for example, minimum finished flood levels, should any of the dwellings need to be re-built. At this stage, we are still obtaining information and staff are unable to identify what consents or consent reviews may be required.
- 4.10. If consents or review of consent conditions are required, ŌDC can provide assistance in the following ways:
- Regulatory process timelines. Staff have undertaken to prioritise processing of any building and/or resource consents related to impacted dwellings. This still depends on getting the right information from applicants or their agents in a timely manner.
  - Regulatory costs. The Group Manager Regulatory and Growth, Manager Planning, and CE have staff delegation to waiver consent fees (building consent and resource consent). While this delegation is exercised occasionally, in this case, due to the nature and scale of the impacted dwellings, staff consider it appropriate to bring this to ŌDC for a decision around regulatory relief for fees.

## 5. Discussion | He kōrerorero

- 5.1. The decision on reinstatement/rebuild or relocate rests with the property owner, in conjunction with their insurer. ŌDC's role in recovery is not to provide decisions relating to reinstatement, rather to provide information, facilitate connections, and assist in navigating through ŌDC's regulatory processes.
- 5.2. Affected owners are unable to apply for regulatory relief through the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund. The Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund Policy explicitly states that fund monies must not be used for council administrative or business costs and are intended as last-resort hardship assistance. Building and resource consent fees constitute council regulatory charges and therefore fall outside the scope of eligible assistance.
- 5.3. For the one uninsured property, ŌDC is not in a position to provide financial support, other than for hardship via the Mayoral Relief Fund, should the eligibility criteria be met.
- 5.4. In respect of regulatory processing timeframes, as indicated staff have undertaken to priority process any building or resource consent relating to reinstatement of affected dwellings.
- 5.5. In respect of regulatory costs, these are unable to be quantified at this stage as staff have no information on how many dwellings may be exempt from building consents, how many may require building and/or resource consent, or the complexity of consents that may be required. However, as a rough indication, a building consent for straightforward reinstatement works for a dwelling could be in the order of \$800 to \$2,000. At very worst case (i.e. all 22 yellow stickered houses needing building consent), and assuming no resource consents are required, the total building consent fees waived could be from \$17,600 to \$44,000.

## 6. Strategic Considerations | Ngā whai whakaarotanga

### Significance and engagement

- 6.1. While this matter is highly significant for the affected property owners and occupiers, the decision sought is limited to whether ŌDC will provide temporary regulatory fee relief for a defined group of yellow stickered dwellings arising from the 13–14 February 2026 weather event. It does not change levels of service, transfer or affect strategic assets, or create a district-wide policy change. On that basis, staff consider the decision to be of **low to moderate significance overall**. If approved the affected homeowners will be informed directly.

### Mana whenua / Māori

- 6.2. There are no known Māori land, papakāinga housing, wāhi tapu, or other specifically identified Māori land-use matters directly affected by this decision. The proposal relates to regulatory fee relief for individual affected dwellings and will be applied on the basis of impact and eligibility, not ethnicity or land ownership type.

### Strategic alignment

- 6.3. Providing targeted regulatory fee relief for dwellings still yellow stickered as a result of the February 2026 weather event is aligned with ŌDC's broader strategic direction of supporting community wellbeing, demonstrating trusted local leadership, and responding proportionately to severe weather disruption and recovery. It is consistent with the Long Term Plan focus on **People, Place and Partnerships**, particularly:
- a) People: by reducing barriers, in a responsible manner, for affected households seeking to progress repair, reinstatement or replacement decisions;
  - b) Place: by supporting safe, lawful recovery and helping ensure homes and communities can return to a habitable state; and
  - c) Partnerships: by reinforcing ŌDC's role as an enabler and navigator alongside residents, insurers and other agencies during recovery.
- 6.4. The proposal also aligns with ŌDC's strategic emphasis on resilience, trusted leadership and practical support for communities facing disruption, while remaining a bounded, one-off response to a specific event rather than a broader change in policy settings.

### Legal

- 6.5. This decision falls under delegations around waiver of regulatory fees under the Building Act 2004 and/or Resource Management Act 1991. Appropriate delegations are in place at staff level or will be amended to extend to governance depending on ŌDC's decision.

### Financial

- 6.6. The indicative impact of full waiver of all building consents for all 22 properties is in the order of up to \$44,000. This is unbudgeted and is in effect loss of user pays revenue. There will be no impacts on staff time, and the actual funding impact for external fees (e.g. contracted building staff if needed, levies, travel costs etc) absorbed by ŌDC will be around 50% of the total indicative costs. This is considered a worse case as some buildings are likely to be exempt from building consents.
- 6.7. Building and resource consent fees constitute council regulatory charges and therefore fall outside the scope of eligible assistance under the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund.
- 6.8. Both resource and building consent will be required where an individual landowner(s) elects to re-build their dwelling with a finished floor level below the level of the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability event, which could involve conditions relating to the mitigation of the potential flood-risk. The compliance costs average at \$3,500 per land use consent.
- 6.9. The limitations on this indicative figure are:
- a) Assumes all yellow stickered buildings need a building consent.
  - b) Fees are indicatively sized around "mid-level", reasonably anticipated work. Actual fees may be higher or lower.

6.10. No provision has been made for resource consent fees, or fees associated with a review of consent conditions (e.g. minimum floor heights). Indicative costs for a resource consent are highly variable but *could* be in the range of \$2,000-\$6000 for a resource consent.

**Risk analysis**

6.11. The risks associated with this decision are considered low to moderate. The decision relates only to whether ŌDC will provide targeted regulatory fee relief for affected yellow stickered dwellings and does not affect the need for appropriate assessment through flood modelling, insurer processes, building consent or resource consent processes. Any physical, natural hazard or environmental risks will continue to be addressed through those separate processes.

6.12. The key risks to ŌDC are financial, precedent, fairness and reputational in nature. These include unbudgeted loss of revenue, the possibility of similar expectations arising in future events, and community concern about the use of public funds to support a limited number of property owners. There is also some implementation risk, as the number and complexity of any future consents remains uncertain.

6.13. These risks are considered manageable because any waiver can be tightly defined as a one-off response to the 13/14 February 2026 weather event, limited to yellow stickered dwellings, and only applied where no other funding source is available. Staff also note that any fee relief would not reduce or alter ŌDC’s statutory responsibilities in relation to safety, hazard management or regulatory compliance

**7. Options analysis | Tātari Kōwhiringa**

**Options summary of considerations**

7.1. Applying to the Mayoral Disaster relief Fund is not an option as building and resource consent fees fall outside the scope of eligible assistance.

**Option 1, pre-approved full waiver**

7.2. Waive all ŌDC building and (if required) resource consent fees for yellow stickered dwellings, where no other funding source is available to cover the fees (e.g. insurance). Indicative costs of this option are around \$44,000.

<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certainty for owners and occupiers and their insurers.</li> <li>• Goodwill gesture for affected families.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unbudgeted cost to ŌDC (as a rough indication only, up to \$44,000 for building consent waivers).</li> <li>• Potential expectations of setting a precedent. This can be mitigated by clearly communicating this as a one-off and specific to the circumstances of this event.</li> <li>• Potential concerns from unaffected residents about subsidising property owners in relation to an identified hazard area.</li> </ul>

**Option 2, pre-approved partial waiver**

7.3. Waive all ŌDC building and (if required) resource consent fees for yellow stickered dwellings to a maximum of 50%, where no other funding source is available to cover the fees (e.g. insurance or Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund). Indicative costs for this option are around \$22,000.

<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some level of certainty for owners and occupiers and their insurers.</li> <li>• A goodwill gesture for affected families.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unbudgeted cost to ŌDC (as a rough indication only, up to \$22,000 for building consent waivers).</li> <li>• Potential expectations of setting a precedent. This can be mitigated by clearly communicating this as a one-off and specific to the circumstances of this event.</li> <li>• Potential concerns from unaffected residents about partly subsidising property owners in relation to an identified hazard area.</li> </ul>

**Option 3, case by case staff discretion**

7.4. Do not waive any fees and leave this as a staff delegated decision on a case-by-case basis.

<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited cost impacts to ŌDC (case by case).</li> <li>• Ability to still apply criteria and support on a case-by-case basis.</li> <li>• Greater transparency (case by case) and no risk of precedent.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No certainty for owners or occupiers.</li> </ul>

**Option 4, case by case governance discretion**

7.5. Defer the decision to the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund Panel (as an unfunded budget, not funded from the Mayoral relief fund), AND amend ŌDC’s delegations register to confer power to the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund Panel to waive building consent fee and resource consent fees.

<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited cost impacts to ŌDC (case by case).</li> <li>• Ability to still apply criteria and support on a case-by-case basis.</li> <li>• Greater transparency (case by case) and no risk of precedent.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No certainty for owners or occupiers.</li> <li>• Panel has no delegated powers to waive fees. This can be mitigated by amending the Delegations Register to confer delegations to the Panel.</li> <li>• Additional work for the panel</li> </ul>

**Recommended option and rationale**

7.6. Option 1 (full pre-approved waiver) is recommended for reasons outlined.

**8. Appendices | Ngā āpitihanga**

Number	Title
n/a	n/a

**Item 30** Waikato Triennial Agreement for the 2025–2028 triennium

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Tanya Winter, Chief Executive

**Type** **DECISION REPORT**

**Date** 31 March 2026



## 1. Purpose | Te kaupapa

- 1.1. To consider and adopt the Waikato Triennial Agreement for the 2025–2028 triennium and to authorise Mayor Rodney Dow to finalise and sign the agreement on behalf of Ōtorohanga District Council.

## 2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua

- 2.1. The Local Government Act 2002 requires all local authorities within a region to enter into a triennial agreement following each triennial election. The Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025–2028 sets out how the region’s councils will work collaboratively and cooperatively for the good governance of the districts, city and region.
- 2.2. The agreement was considered and endorsed by the Waikato Mayoral Forum on 2 March 2026 and is now presented to ŌDC for formal adoption. The agreement sets out principles and protocols for communication and collaboration and identifies areas of focus.
- 2.3. Due to the prioritisation of coordinated responses to central government reform proposals, the Mayors and the Regional Council Chair agreed that adoption of the agreement would occur as soon as practicable following 1 March 2026.

## 3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi

That Ōtorohanga District Council:

- a) **ADOPTS** the Waikato Triennial Agreement for the 2025–2028 triennium; and
- b) **AUTHORISES** Mayor Dow to finalise and sign the Waikato Triennial Agreement on behalf of Ōtorohanga District Council.

## 4. Context | Horopaki

- 4.1. Section 15, Local Government Act 2022 requires that following each triennial election, all local authorities in a region must enter into an agreement setting out how councils will work co-operatively and collaboratively for the good governance of the districts, city and region.

- 4.2. The local authorities of the Waikato region work together through the Waikato Chief Executives' Forum (CE Forum) and the Waikato Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum).
- 4.3. By agreement, the Mayoral Forum prioritised the need to work on a shared understanding of, and collaborative submission to, central Government's reform programme. It was agreed the Triennial Agreement would be signed by all councils as soon as possible after 1 March 2026.

## 5. Discussion | He kōrerorero

- 5.1. The proposed agreement builds on the 2022-2025 agreement with respect to the strategic context and priorities of regional significance relevant to the 2025-2028 triennium. Key areas of focus for the term of this agreement include (but are not limited to):
- a) Responding to and capitalising on opportunities arising from Local Government reforms.
  - b) Advancing a City and Regional Deal, building on positive feedback from the region's initial proposal and leveraging strengths in water, energy, and intergovernmental collaboration.
  - c) Strengthening collaboration established through the region's response to water reform initiatives.
  - d) Collaborating in the development of a Regional Spatial Plan to guide long-term land use and infrastructure planning.
- 5.2. The agreement also covers:
- a) Protocols for communication and co-ordination among the region's local authorities; and
  - b) A statement of the process by which the local authorities will comply with section 16 in respect of proposals for new regional council activities; and
  - c) Processes and protocols through which all local authorities can participate in identifying, delivering, and funding facilities and services of significance to more than one district.
- 5.3. The cost allocation for CoLab secretariat services has been reviewed and updated using the agreed methodology of:
- 75% weighting based on council operating spend (in this case the FY2025 figures)
  - 25% equal weighting.
- 5.4. Subject to formal adoption, the Mayor will finalise and sign the Waikato Triennial Agreement on behalf of ŌDC. The agreement will remain in effect for the 2025–2028 triennium unless amended by unanimous agreement of the signatories or replaced following the 2028 local government elections.

## 6. Strategic Considerations | Ngā whai whakaarotanga

### Significance and engagement

- 6.1. The agreement has been developed through regional governance forums, including the Waikato Mayoral Forum and the Waikato Chief Executives' Forum. It does not require separate public

consultation, as it relates to inter-council governance arrangements rather than service delivery or regulatory decisions affecting the public directly.

### **Mana whenua / Māori**

- 6.2. The Waikato Triennial Agreement establishes inter-council governance arrangements and protocols for collaboration at a regional level. The adoption of the Agreement does not, of itself, make decisions that directly affect Māori land, resources, or statutory rights, nor does it change ŌDC's existing obligations to engage with mana whenua.
- 6.3. The Agreement recognises the importance of working collaboratively with iwi Māori and other partners on matters of regional significance. The Waikato Mayoral Forum meet twice a year with the iwi leaders as part of this commitment.
- 6.4. Ongoing engagement with mana whenua will continue to occur through ŌDC's established relationships, processes, and statutory responsibilities, and through regionally coordinated initiatives where appropriate.

### **Strategic alignment**

- 6.5. The Waikato Triennial Agreement aligns with ŌDC's strategic direction by supporting collaborative governance, effective leadership, and coordinated responses to matters of regional significance.
- 6.6. Adoption of the agreement supports ŌDC's commitment to working constructively with neighbouring local authorities, central government, iwi Māori, and other stakeholders to achieve efficient, effective, and well-coordinated outcomes.
- 6.7. The Agreement provides a strategic framework for regional cooperation on key priorities, including legislative reform, infrastructure and service delivery, and long-term planning, while preserving ŌDC's autonomy in local decision-making and accountability to its community.

### **Legal**

- 6.8. This report and the proposed decision are made pursuant to the Local Government Act 2002, including sections 14 and 15, which promote collaboration between local authorities and require the adoption of a triennial agreement following each local government election. The Agreement also outlines processes relevant to section 16 of the Act where significant new regional activities are proposed.
- 6.9. The decision is consistent with ŌDC's governance role and statutory obligations and does not amend or override ŌDC's existing decision-making responsibilities or delegations.

### **Financial**

- 6.10. The agreement provides for shared funding of secretariat support for the Waikato Mayoral Forum, administered by Co-Lab, using an agreed cost-allocation methodology. ŌDC's contribution is 3.2% or \$352.00 and this will be met from existing budgets. Adoption of the agreement does not of itself commit ŌDC to additional expenditure beyond agreed contributions.

### **Risk analysis**

- 6.11. Failure to adopt the triennial agreement would place ŌDC in breach of its statutory obligations under the Local Government Act 2002 and would limit ŌDC's ability to participate fully in coordinated regional

governance arrangements. Adoption of the agreement provides clarity of process, shared expectations, and risk mitigation through agreed protocols and collaborative mechanisms.

## 7. Options analysis | Tātari Kōwhiringa

### Options summary of considerations

	<b>Option 1: Adopt the Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025–2028 (Recommended)</b>	<b>Option 2: Adopt the agreement with amendments or conditions</b>
<b>Summary</b>	ŌDC adopts the Waikato Triennial Agreement as presented and authorises the Mayor to finalise and sign the agreement on behalf of Ōtorohanga District Council.	ŌDC adopts the Waikato Triennial Agreement subject to amendments or conditions specific to ŌDC.
<b>Advantages</b>	<p>Meets statutory requirements under the Local Government Act 2002.</p> <p>Enables ŌDC to participate fully in agreed regional governance, collaboration, and advocacy arrangements.</p> <p>Provides clarity of protocols, expectations, and processes for the 2025–2028 triennium.</p> <p>Supports coordinated regional responses to matters of shared significance.</p>	<p>Allows ŌDC to signal specific concerns or clarifications.</p> <p>Provides an opportunity to seek refinement of particular provisions.</p>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Commits ŌDC to the agreed regional framework and associated governance protocols.	<p>The agreement is intended to be adopted consistently by all signatory councils; amendments may not be supported.</p> <p>May delay adoption and place ŌDC at risk of non-compliance with statutory timeframes.</p> <p>Could reduce alignment with regional partners.</p>

	Option 3: Defer adoption	Option 4: Do not adopt the agreement
<b>Summary</b>	Council defers consideration of the Waikato Triennial Agreement to a future meeting.	Council resolves not to adopt the Waikato Triennial Agreement.
<b>Advantages</b>	Provides additional time for consideration.	None identified.
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<p>Does not meet the intent of statutory requirements to enter into a triennial agreement following the election.</p> <p>Delays ŌDC’s participation in regional governance arrangements.</p> <p>Creates uncertainty for regional partners.</p>	<p>Places ŌDC in breach of its statutory obligations under the Local Government Act 2002.</p> <p>Excludes ŌDC from agreed regional governance and collaboration mechanisms.</p> <p>Limits ŌDC’s ability to influence and participate in matters of regional significance.</p>

**Recommended option and rationale**

7.1. Option 1 is recommended as it satisfies statutory requirements, enables ŌDC to participate fully in regional governance and collaboration arrangements, and provides a clear and agreed framework for working with neighbouring councils on matters of regional significance for the 2025–2028 triennium.

**8. Appendices | Ngā āpiti hanga**

Number	Title
1	Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025–2028

## 2025-2028 Waikato Triennial Agreement

### Purpose

1. The Waikato Triennial Agreement for the 2025-2028 triennium sets the context for partnership and progress. It is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Act 2002 and represents the shared desire of local government in the Waikato region to work collaboratively within and across boundaries to maximise efficiency and effectiveness and to promote sustainable growth and development. It is intended to align collective efforts to work with central government, iwi Māori, and others committed to building a strong, cohesive and prosperous region, thereby contributing to New Zealand's economic growth and development. The Waikato Mayoral Forum will be critical to the successful execution of this agreement. Such collaboration will result in measurable improvements in the way the region positively competes for resources and talent, and the manner in which it leads its communities.

### Strategic context

#### Waikato key to New Zealand's economy

2. The Waikato region is a cornerstone of New Zealand's economy. The region's location as a critical national transport, freight and logistics corridor supports a diverse economy spanning agriculture, advanced manufacturing, technology, renewable energy, aquaculture, tourism, forestry and healthcare. The region is home to significant natural resources including major river catchments, geothermal energy, 10,000km<sup>2</sup> of coastal marine area, 1,200km of coastline and \$1.1B in flood protection infrastructure. These strengths are bolstered by an expanding Māori economic base and the longstanding cultural and regional leadership of the Kingitanga.
3. Despite its strengths, the region faces environmental and social challenges. Whilst increased development and population growth across some parts of the region provides opportunities for the wider regional economy, it also introduces challenges including inequities in housing, health, education, transport and significant impacts on the environment that need to be managed. Addressing these issues is essential to ensuring a resilient and prosperous future for Waikato communities.

#### Navigating national and global waves of change

4. The New Zealand Government has launched a programme of legislative reform aimed at enabling growth and infrastructure development. Key reforms include:
  - Replacement of the Resource Management Act 1991 with the Natural Environment Act and the Planning Act, which will respectively manage environmental protection and enable land-use planning for development.
  - Amendments to the Local Government Act 2002, refocusing councils on core infrastructure and essential services, enhancing financial discipline, and increasing transparency and accountability.
  - A proposal to simplify local government by removing elected regional councillors and replacing them with interim Combined Territories Boards (CTBs) comprising the city and district council mayors in each region. The CTBs would be charged with developing regional reorganisation plans designed to identify the best way councils can work together to deliver effective and efficient services in the region.

5. These reforms will significantly reshape governance, operating models and structures of Waikato local authorities.

#### Connected regional leadership

6. Regional leaders must navigate the acceleration of global and national change to deliver best outcomes for the people and places they serve. Geopolitical fragmentation, climate change, demographic shifts, digital disruption, and resource competition are contributing to ongoing structural challenges like inflation and affordability. These pressures require a shift toward permanent transformation and a continuing focus on partnerships, relationships and collaborative governance models that support responsive decision-making in financially constrained environments.
7. In this evolving context, Waikato’s anchor institutions—including local councils, iwi, and community-based organisations — play a key role in providing economic stability, social cohesion, and identity. Their deep-rooted presence and shared interest in the region’s future positions them well to collaborate and guide strategic investment in infrastructure, housing, health, education, and employment.
8. Waikato councils have a proven track record of working together, including through initiatives such as Local Water Done Well (LWDW), which addresses water service delivery and infrastructure funding challenges. Building on this foundation, through the Waikato Mayoral Forum, the Waikato councils are committed to strengthening partnerships with iwi Māori and engaging constructively with central government to align on long-term strategic objectives that deliver enduring benefits for the Waikato region and New Zealand as a whole.

#### Current legislative context

9. The Waikato Triennial Agreement codifies how the region’s mayors will work together. Under the Local Government Act 2002, all local authorities in each region must enter into a Triennial Agreement no later than 1 March after the election. The Agreement details protocols for communication and coordination among the members. Proposed changes to the Local Government Act (not yet enacted as at March 2026) intend to remove reference to the ‘four wellbeings’ and restate the purpose of local government to include democratic decision-making, infrastructure, public services, and supporting economic growth.

#### **Role of the Mayoral Forum**

10. The Waikato Mayoral Forum is a central governance and leadership body for advancing the region’s collective interests. It plays a pivotal role in shaping the future success of Waikato’s diverse communities by leveraging interdependencies and connections across council boundaries to foster economic growth, social resilience, and regional cohesion.
11. Through the Forum, councils are expected to champion a shared regional vision, develop a coherent and inclusive development plan, and collectively position the Waikato as an attractive destination for public and private investment. The Chair of the Mayoral Forum acts as the region’s principal representative, ensuring Waikato is well-positioned to collaborate with central government, neighbouring regions—particularly Auckland and Bay of Plenty—and other strategic stakeholders, to identify and pursue investment opportunities at scale.

12. The Forum is responsible for guiding decisions on significant regional programmes and partnerships with central government. Key areas of focus for the term of this agreement include (but are not limited to):

- Responding to and capitalising on opportunities arising from **Local Government reforms**.
- Advancing a **City and Regional Deal**, building on positive feedback from the region's initial proposal and leveraging strengths in water, energy, and intergovernmental collaboration.
- Strengthening collaboration established through the region's response to **water reform initiatives**.
- Collaborating in the development of a **Regional Spatial Plan** to guide long-term land use and infrastructure planning.

13. Each agreed work programme will be formally included in the Mayoral Forum's agenda and will be led by Mayors, supported by Chief Executives and designated working groups. This structure ensures strategic alignment, progress and accountability, and coordinated delivery across the region.

#### **Role of Waikato Chief Executive Forum**

14. The Waikato Chief Executive Forum (CE Forum) is a key group supporting the Mayoral Forum. In conjunction with elected members, the CE Forum identifies and develops the regionally significant and strategic programmes of work that comprise the Mayoral Forum agenda. Through their staff, the CEs will identify topics for the Mayoral Forum agenda, sign off work and present work to the Mayoral Forum for feedback, endorsement and approval through each council's own decision-making processes, if required.

15. Funding decisions will be made by CEs, consistent with their delegations, or via recommendation to the Mayoral Forum and then on to each council's Long Term Plan or Annual Plan processes.

#### **SIGNATORIES**

16. The parties:

- Hamilton City Council
- Hauraki District Council
- Matamata-Piako District Council
- Ōtorohanga District Council
- Rotorua District Council
- South Waikato District Council
- Taupō District Council
- Thames-Coromandel District Council
- Waikato District Council
- Waikato Regional Council
- Waipā District Council
- Waitomo District Council.

## Principles

17. Signatories to this agreement recognise that:

- a) While the communities within the region are diverse and encompass a range of desired outcomes, it is important for local government to collaborate on strategic regional issues and opportunities. On occasions, issues and opportunities that are shared by some councils might be of lesser importance to others. The Triennial Agreement therefore acknowledges that it will be appropriate to have a range of sub-agreements that address more localised or sub-regional matters between and among councils depending on what is best for the people and places we serve.
- b) Collaboration can aid in effective and efficient planning and encourage shared services and a collective approach to reduce costs, increase available resources, and help to make strategic judgements about the allocation of resources.
- c) Collaboration can assist councils promote outcomes consistent with the purpose of local government.
- d) There is a need for open communication, information sharing and seeking agreement on strategic issues.
- e) We will speak as one voice when there is unanimous agreement and in good faith attempt to reach unanimity on issues of regional and national significance critical to the wellbeing of the region and its communities.
- f) We acknowledge that it might not always be possible to achieve common direction on all strategic issues brought before the Forum given that each party to the agreement has functions, obligations, and rights to make decisions for their area which may conflict with the position of other signatories to this agreement. However, we commit to working through regionally significant programmes of work requiring collaboration and a common direction.
- g) Where appropriate, aligning with and influencing Central Government policy is important to the delivery of good quality, cost effective infrastructure, public services, and regulatory functions to promote and enhance the wellbeing of our communities. The forum will play an active role negotiating with Central Government on common, agreed, positions on national policy that affect Local Government and their communities and, where regional functions can be better convened, governed and or implemented at a regional level, such as when they require Local Government relationships, knowledge, expertise, and support.

### Protocols for communication and coordination

18. Signatories to this agreement recognise that:

- a) Each council has accountability to different communities and will work together on issues where it is agreed that the region will benefit from a collaborative approach.
- b) When a council has a significant disagreement with the position of the others, the other councils will make every effort to respectfully accommodate, acknowledge and fairly represent the dissenting view.
- c) When a significant decision or issue affects a particular council then that council should be consulted in formulating the region's response.
- d) Councils agree to act in good faith and in a transparent manner on issues of information and disclosure.

- e) Councils should provide early notification of decisions that may affect other councils in the region. Communication protocols may be developed between councils where it is agreed better communication is desired.
- f) All formal public communications from Mayoral Forum meetings will be circulated to all councils for comment prior to their release, unless otherwise agreed by the Mayoral Forum in order to meet urgent and unforeseen deadlines.
- g) Councils will apply a 'no surprises' approach whereby early notice will be given over disagreements concerning policy or work programmes before critical public announcements are made.
- h) If councils make decisions that are inconsistent with the agreement, they must explicitly note that inconsistency and the reasons for it and notify the other councils that are parties to the agreement.

### **General approach to collaboration**

#### 19. Signatories to this agreement should:

- a) Share resources for the purpose of preparing background information on the various communities within the region. Such information may include demographics, survey data and scientific studies and the analysis of social, economic, environmental, and cultural trends.
- b) Seek to attract investment and Government support in the region by aligning community interests, working collaboratively through Waikato Mayoral Forum work streams and other options, developing agreed positions on matters of importance to the region and continuing to develop and strengthen existing joint approaches to engage with Government agencies and other organisations.
- c) Actively identify opportunities and projects to collaborate; building upon the approaches that were used to bring about Waikato Waters Ltd and IAWAI - Flowing Waters.
- d) Promote communication and cooperation among the region's councils with respect to shared services and other collaborative opportunities.
- e) Make draft strategies, policies and plans available to all councils in the region for discussion and development.
- f) Provide guidance on the implementation of strategic collaborative projects and monitor progress of collaborative initiatives.
- g) Utilise the Waikato Mayoral Forum work streams and other collaborative options to ensure that all councils can participate in identifying, delivering, and funding regionally significant projects and programmes, facilities, and services to more than one council.
- h) Invite Government Ministers, relevant officials, corporate, community and iwi leaders to meet to discuss issues of strategic importance to the region.
- i) Advocate for strategic investment in the region and promote the strategic benefits and advantages of the Waikato as part of the nationally strategically important upper North Island.

- j) If necessary, establish one or more joint committees or other joint governance arrangements to give better effect to communication and coordination or to assist with identifying, delivering and funding regionally significant projects and programmes, facilities, and services to more than one district, or to consider proposals for new regional council activities.

#### **Mayoral Forum meetings**

20. Signatories to this agreement will endeavour to hold a meeting of Mayors and the Regional Chairperson (supported by their Chief Executives) at least quarterly to discuss any pertinent issues and to review the performance of workstreams within the agreement. These meetings will be under the banner of the Waikato Mayoral Forum.
21. The Waikato Mayoral Forum is not a formal committee constituted under the Local Government Act, and therefore meetings are not public. Recommendations from the Mayoral Forum are for members to take to their respective councils for consideration and decisions.
22. The Chief Executives' Forum will also meet regularly to advance initiatives as requested by the Mayors and Regional Chairperson.
23. Special meetings may be called at the request of four members.
24. The secretariat will prepare an agenda for the Mayoral Forum meetings in consultation with the Chair and the Chief Executives' Forum.
25. Agendas for meetings will be issued and minutes will be taken and circulated.
26. The appointed Mayoral Forum Chairperson will ensure minutes are taken, approved, and circulated.
27. Any public communications from these meetings will be approved by the Mayoral Forum prior to their release, unless otherwise agreed by participants to delegate to the Chair in order to meet urgent deadlines.
28. The Waikato Mayoral Forum shall have the power to invite people to attend and participate in its meetings on a permanent and/or issues basis.

#### **Secretariat support**

29. The Mayoral Forum will appoint Co-Lab to carry out the secretariat function.
30. As part of that role, Co-Lab's functions will include preparing agendas (in consultation with the Forum Chair, workstream leads (refer below), and the CE Forum Chair), arranging venues on the day of meetings, taking minutes and actions, keeping any books and accounts and attending to any other business required to support the forum.

31. Councils will fund Co-Lab for the secretariat role on the following basis:

<b>Council</b>	<b>%ages</b>
Hamilton City	20.6%
Hauraki District	5.1%
Matamata-Piako District	5.6%
Ōtorohanga District	3.2%
Rotorua Lakes District	10.4%
South Waikato District	4.7%
Taupō District Council	7.8%
Thames-Coromandel District	7.8%
Waikato District	11.1%
Waikato Regional Council	10.7%
Waipā District	9.2%
Waitomo District	3.8%
	100.0%

32. Co-Lab will also undertake the activities noted above in relation to any programmes of work agreed by the Mayoral Forum. The basis of funding the secretariat for these programmes will mirror the (yet to be agreed) funding allocation for other costs associated with each programme.

**Significant new activities proposed by the regional council**

33. If the regional council or a regional council-controlled organisation proposes to undertake a significant new activity then section 16 of the Local Government Act 2002 shall be adhered to.

34. The regional council agrees to discuss the issues involved at one or more of the existing fora and to provide preliminary draft proposals to the affected councils for early comment, including any amendments to the regional council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

35. Where the regional council proposes to undertake a significant new activity that involves one or more territorial authorities within the region the following protocols will apply:

- a) The regional council will as soon as practicable inform all councils within the region of the nature, scope, and reasons for the proposal.
- b) Councils will be given a reasonable period but no less than 40 working days, to respond to any such proposal. The regional council will fully consider any submissions on the proposal made by councils within the region.
- c) Should there be substantive disagreement between the councils on whether the regional council should undertake the activity, the parties will refer the matter to mediation as set out in the process in s16 (4)-(6) of the Local Government Act for resolving disagreement.

### **Significant new activities proposed by councils**

36. New activities of regional significance proposed and or led by a council or councils, and agreed by the Mayoral Forum, will follow the spirit and intent of the protocols set out for the regional council and regional council-controlled organisations when new regional activities are proposed.

### **Consultation in relation to the Regional Policy Statement**

37. To meet the requirements of clause 3A of Schedule 1 to the Resource Management Act 1991, the consultation process to be used by affected councils in relation to any further changes to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement will be developed and agreed to by all the councils. Protocols will be developed that ensure affected councils have full and effective involvement in the scoping and drafting of any changes to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.

### **Strategic priorities of regional significance**

38. As noted above, the Mayoral Forum makes decisions about significant programmes of work undertaken at regional scale. For the 2025-2028 triennium, these include, but are not limited to:

- Responding to and capitalising on opportunities arising from Local Government reforms.
- Advancing a City and Regional Deal, building on positive feedback from the region's initial proposal and leveraging strengths in water, energy, and intergovernmental collaboration.
- Strengthening collaboration established through the region's response to water reform initiatives.
- Collaborating in the development of a Regional Spatial Plan to guide long-term land use and infrastructure planning.

39. The Mayoral Forum, through the CE Forum, will develop and agree a work programme for the triennium to implement these initiatives following adoption of the Triennial Agreement by all councils.

40. The Mayoral Forum will exercise governance oversight over this work programme.

### **Term of the Triennial Agreement**

41. The Triennial Agreement will continue to operate until such time as it is either amended by the accord of all parties or is renewed following the 2028 local government elections.

### **Other (sub-regional) agreements**

42. This Agreement does not prevent councils from entering into other agreements among themselves or outside the Waikato region. The Mayoral Forum recognises that it may make sense to collaborate and partner at a sub-regional level. Nothing in this agreement should be construed to prevent councils addressing issues, or capitalising on opportunities, at a sub-regional level. However, any other such agreement should not be contrary to the purpose and spirit of this Agreement.

### **Resolving disagreement**

43. In the event of a disagreement over the terms of this agreement, the parties agree to refer the issue to mediation for a resolution. In the absence of an agreement to mediation between the local authorities, the matter will be referred to a process as specified by the Minister of Local Government.

**AUTHORITY** This agreement is signed by the following on behalf of their respective authorities:

<b>Council</b>	<b>Mayor/Chair signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Hamilton City Council		
Hauraki District Council		
Matamata-Piako District Council		
Ōtorohanga District Council		
Rotorua District Council		
South Waikato District Council		
Taupō District Council		
Thames-Coromandel District Council		
Waikato District Council		
Waikato Regional Council		
Waipā District Council		
Waitomo District Council		

**Item 31** Simplifying Local Government Proposal – Retrospective Endorsement of Submission

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Tony Quickfall, Group Manager Regulatory and Growth

**Type** **DECISION REPORT**

**Date** 24 February 2026



## 1. Purpose | Te kaupapa

1.1. To seek ratification of a submission from Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) on the “Simplifying Local Government” proposal.

## 2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua

2.1. On 25 November 2025, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) released Government’s proposal for Mayors to take over governance of regional councils, called “Simplifying Local Government”. Submissions were invited with submissions closing on 20 February 2026. If it proceeds, then the proposal would be implemented through new legislation.

2.2. In consultation with the Mayor, staff drafted a submission and workshopped with ŌDC on 10 February which was then finalised and lodged with DIA. The purpose of this report is to formally ratify the submission by way of council endorsement.

## 3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi

That Ōtorohanga District Council **ENDORSES** the submission lodged on behalf of ŌDC by the Mayor, noting a draft was circulated to Councillors for feedback.

## 4. Context | Horopaki

4.1. As ŌDC is aware, Government has embarked on an ambitious suite of reforms. Amongst those is a proposal to simplify local government. The proposal, as set out in the public notification, is as follows:

*How is local government currently structured?*

*Most places in New Zealand have two separate councils – a regional council, and a city or district council (sometimes called ‘territorial authorities’). Each have a separate set of elected councillors who look after separate (but often similar) things.*

*There are 11 regional councils that govern services such as environmental management, regional transport planning, and civil defence. There are 67 city or district councils that govern*

services such as roads, water infrastructure, rubbish collection, libraries, parks, and land use planning. There are 6 'unitary authorities' that combine the two roles.

What is being proposed?

The Government is proposing to simplify local government in two steps:

**Step 1:** Instead of electing separate regional councillors, the mayors you already vote for will collectively form a Combined Territories Board (CTB). The CTB will lead regional issues and govern the regional council, taking over all of the current regional council's roles and obligations. We also want to know what you think about the alternative options of appointing one or more Crown Commissioners (appointed by the Government) to lead or join the board.

**Step 2:** The CTB will develop a plan for how the councils in your region can work together more effectively and efficiently (called a Regional Reorganisation Plan). The plan will be developed in consultation with you, examined independently, and be approved by the Minister of Local Government.

Why this change?

Local democracy is important, but many people don't vote in local elections or understand the difference between regional councils and city or district councils.

The current system has built-in duplication (two sets of councillors). CTBs simplify governance by consolidating decision making with mayors. This reduces duplication and ensures regional decision making is more aligned across councils. It also ensures there is clear accountability to the public by the CTB for delivery of regional services. If Crown Commissioners are appointed, they would have the same responsibilities as regional councillors currently have.

Regional reorganisation plans provide a structured, transparent platform to improve efficiency and ensure services are delivered in a way that fits the region's needs. They will be designed to answer the question: "What is the best way the councils in my region can work together to deliver effective and efficient services and functions in this region?"

- 4.2. At a workshop on 9 December 2025, staff presented an update of the various reforms. At that workshop, ŌDC confirmed a desire to submit on the Simplifying Local Government proposal, and to not submit on other reforms.
- 4.3. A submission was drafted, circulated to Councillors for feedback on 13 January 2026, and workshopped with ŌDC for final direction on 10 February 2026. The final as-submitted version reflects the workshop feedback and is attached as Appendix 1.

## 5. Discussion | He kōrerorero

5.1. The Submission is self-explanatory, but by way of summary of the key points:

- a) ŌDC's submission acknowledges the intent of proposal and supports the general concept around simplifying local government.

- b) The submission reflects ŌDC's support for Mayors (and one or more Commissioners as advisors) establishing a Combined Territorial Board, and general endorsement of proposed Regional Reorganisation Plans.
- c) It expresses a preference for voting of "one mayor one vote" on the basis of existing regional examples (e.g. the Land Transport Committee).
- d) It advocates for locking in existing treaty settlements and allowing treaty settlements in process to run their course as a non-negotiable bottom line.
- e) The submission notes the unprecedented and ambitious nature of the reforms ("everything all at once"), and notes the tension between the volume and extent of reform (which will inevitably require increased resourcing during transition) against the backdrop of a proposed rates cap. The submission requests a review of timeframes and sequencing so that the reform programme is achievable.
- f) The submission endorses similarly aligned sector submissions.

## 6. Strategic Considerations | Ngā whai whakaarotanga

### Significance and engagement

- 6.1. Ratifying the submission is not significant in terms of ŌDC's Significance and Engagement policy, and no engagement/consultation with the community is required.

### Mana whenua / Māori

- 6.2. The Government proposal, and subsequent Regional Reorganisation Plans, have the potential to impact Māori. However, this submission in and of itself does not directly impact Māori. In its submission ŌDC has expressed honouring existing treaty settlements and allowing ones in progress to run their course as a non-negotiable bottom line, for this council. This sentiment underpins ŌDC's ongoing support for relationship building with iwi/Māori across the district.

### Strategic alignment

- 6.3. As this is an entirely new proposal around local government that was not foreseen in ŌDC's Long Term Plan, there is no direct strategic alignment. However, the submission reflects and aligns with ŌDC's higher level vision ("a dynamic, inclusive and unique district where kiwi can fly") and community outcomes ("People, Place, Partnerships").

### Legal

- 6.4. There are no specific legal considerations or ramifications. If the proposal proceeds to legislation a further report will be brought to ŌDC around implementation.

### Financial

- 6.5. There are no direct financial implications arising from the Submission.

**Risk analysis**

6.6. New or amended legislation is recognised as a substantive risk for ŌDC. In this case, the proposal relates to once-in-a-generation structural and governance reform. Providing local leadership and ensuring the district’s views are made known to Central Government via submissions and other mitigation mechanisms serves to put forward our voice.

**7. Options analysis | Tātari Kōwhiringa**

**Options summary of considerations**

**Option 1: Endorse the Submission as Lodged**

7.1. This option is to simply endorse the submission as it was lodged. The submission was circulated for elected member feedback and was workshopped as a final draft prior to lodgement. On this basis, the submission as lodged reflects elected member input and ratification, by way of endorsement, is a formality.

**Option 2: Do not Endorse the Submission**

7.2. Under this option, ŌDC would not formally ratify the submission as lodged. Ten implications for not endorsing would be for the submission to be a submission of the Mayor, rather than a submission endorsed of the whole council. Under this option, staff would be obligated to inform the Department of Internal Affairs that ŌDC’s submission has not been endorsed by the full Council and is a submission of the Mayor. This may reduce the weighting that Government officials give ŌDC’s submission in their final decision.

**Recommended option and rationale**

7.3. For these reasons, Option 1 (endorse the submission) is recommended.

**8. Appendices | Ngā Āpitianga**

Number	Title
1	Final submission as lodged

**Appendix 1: Final Submission As Lodged**

16 February 2026

## SUBMISSION: SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Submitted to:**

[simplifyinglocalgovernment@dia.govt.nz](mailto:simplifyinglocalgovernment@dia.govt.nz)

Department of Internal Affairs

PO Box 805, Wellington 6140

**Submitted by:**

Ōtorohanga District Council.

Postal: PO Box 11, Ōtorohanga 3940

Office: 17 Maniapoto Street, Ōtorohanga

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### Our District

Ōtorohanga District covers 1976 square kilometres, from the seaside towns of Kāwhia and Aotea in the west, to Lake Arapuni on the eastern boundary. There are two urban centres of Ōtorohanga and Kāwhia, surrounded by thriving rural communities. Ōtorohanga District is part of the King Country region, known by Māori as 'Te Rohe Potae' - "The Area of the Hat", associated with the area's documented history around land confiscation. Our district extends along the west coast of the North Island from Mount Pirongia in the north to the coastal town of Kāwhia in the south and stretches inland to Pureora Forest Park and the Waikato River to the east.

Geographically, the District comprises three distinct areas of approximately equal size.

- The eastern area bounded by the Waikato River is predominantly easy hill country and forms the southern limit of the Waikato Basin.
- Ōtorohanga town is centrally placed, being within an easy driving distance of Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua, Taupō and New Plymouth.
- The more remote Western area comprises steeper hill country, and the small coastal villages of Kāwhia and Aotea.

The entire district has a long and rich tangata whenua history with Ngāti Maniapoto, Raukawa and Waikato Tainui being the predominant iwi authorities, along with multiple hapū.

The local economy is primarily based on agriculture, with sheep, beef and dairy farming being the principle agricultural activities with a minor tourism economy.

Ōtorohanga town has a population of approximately 3000 and is a service centre for the surrounding rural areas. Kāwhia is a small coastal holiday resort located on the shores of the Kāwhia Harbour, 57 kilometres west of Ōtorohanga via State Highway 31. Kāwhia has a permanent population of approximately 400, but

the population increases to over 2000 at peak holiday periods. Kāwhia is the spiritual home of the Tainui people who first settled there 600 to 700 years ago. The Kāwhia Harbour covers more than 6000 hectares, with five rivers feeding into it and is a popular and productive fishing spot.

Our district also includes the small coastal settlement of Aotea with approximately 60 permanent residents, on the southern side of the Aotea Harbour.

Ōtorohanga District is also home to Aotearoa's first mega prison, Waikeria. Stage 1 was completed July 2025, and stage 2 is due for completion in 2029. Our Council is supporting the prison with planning and building regulatory services. Once fully completed, Waikeria will be a significant contributor to the Ōtorohanga economy and will be our district's second biggest community, after Ōtorohanga township.

## **Our Council**

Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) administers the Local Government Act 2002 and all related functions on behalf of our ratepayers and residents. We work closely with Waitomo District Council and Waipā District Council and have formal shared service agreements between these three councils including civil defence, animal control, and regulatory services. Outside of the formal shared service agreements all three councils closely collaborate on topics of mutual interest or where we can gain efficiencies of alignment.



# SUBMISSION BY ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL

## 1. Context

- 1.1. ŌDC generally supports the intent of the proposal to create local government efficiencies, in particular regional decision making.
- 1.2. However, we have concerns over the delivery of this proposal due to the sheer quantity of reform underway concurrently (with more to come).
- 1.3. We acknowledge some benefits of coordination around reforms which may overlap or which have synergies.
- 1.4. Our concerns are:
  - a. **There is not sufficient physical personnel capacity in the current systems** to deliver on an extremely ambitious timeframe. We do not believe the timeframes are achievable without significant transitional funding. This is not just a Local Government problem to solve but has risk around either “fast and bad” decision making to meet deadlines or failing to meet deadlines altogether. Government transition support (funding and resources) to the new system will be required so the burden of changes sought by Government does not fall on ratepayers. The Government’s reform agenda requires a whole-of-government approach with clear alignment across legislative changes, clarity of functions at all levels, and localised decision-making.
  - b. **The tension between simplifying local government (transition in particular) and moving to a rates cap at the same time as implementing a suite of reforms is potentially irreconcilable** – at the same time as introducing uncertainty and significant changes with a mega-Ministry restructure and presumably reduced levels of support for Local Government while the new Ministry is bedding in.

## 2. Our submission

- 2.1. Our specific submission comments are set out as follows:

*What is council’s general position around simplifying local government?*

- 2.2. ŌDC generally supports the proposal and agrees there is a need to simplify local government

*Any comments on the proposal overall?*

- 2.3. Overall, ŌDC considers the proposal has some merit. We however note the sheer volume of reforms underway concurrently and the pressures this is placing on Local Government resourcing.
  - a. Government transition support (funding and resources) to the new system will be required so the burden of changes sought by Government does not fall on ratepayers. This includes the Government investment in systems to support the reform and resolving long standing issues around funding of Local Government, with Crown contribution for unfunded mandates. The purpose of Local Government is to deliver local decisions for local communities.

- b. A whole-of-government and whole-of-system approach is required for effective reform, as well as genuine and effective partnership between Central Government and Local Government.
- c. Genuine Iwi partnership is fundamental to the success of reforms. Decision making processes, including on the Combined Territorial Boards, must account for Iwi participation.

*Do you agree with replacing regional councillors with a Combined Territorial Board (CTB)?*

2.4. Yes, ŌDC supports this approach, in principle.

*What do you like or dislike about the proposal to replace regional councillors with a CTB?*

- 2.5. The functions of regional councils require specific working knowledge of regional governance. ŌDC is concerned about the steep learning curve or skill gap of appointing Mayors into regional governance roles. This is addressed later as a **reason we support** at least one Crown Commissioner appointment to serve as “professional advisor” to the Mayors. This is particularly relevant for the Waikato which is the region with the biggest cohort of 10 mayors, one of the most complex regional iwi make-ups, and is nationally the most complex/diverse region including uniquely Waikato regional governance around geothermal resources and Te Ture Whaimana – Vision and Strategy for the Waikato / Waipā Rivers and their catchments. The Waikato region is also a significant contributor to Aotearoa’s national GDP with all councils in the region being part of this success.
- 2.6. In our region (Waikato), we note the Waikato Regional Council has 27 committees and groups to which current elected regional councillors are appointed. It would be impractical for the Mayors, on top of their existing workloads, to also be appointed to all these groups. For this reason, **ŌDC propose that** the Waikato Mayors be given discretion to delegate appointments to existing committees/groups from existing district/city councillors.

#### **Waikato Regional Council Governance Appointments**

##### ***Discretionary Committees***

- CE Employment and Remuneration Committee
- Environmental Performance Committee

##### ***Mandatory / Statutory Committees***

- Future Proof Implementation Committee
- Hauraki Gulf Forum
- Raukawa Charitable Trust and WRC Co-Governance Committee
- Regional Transport Committee
- Te Araea River Iwi Trust and WRC Co-Governance Committee
- Te Kopu a Kanapanapa
- Te Nehenehenui Co-Governance Forum
- Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board and WRC Co-Governance Committee
- Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group
- Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee

##### ***Additional Appointments***

- Hauraki Māori Trust Board and Waikato Regional Council Joint Working Party
- Hauraki Plains Adaption Planning Joint Working Party

- Local Government NZ Regional Sector Group
- Local Government NZ Zone 2
- Lower Waikato River Catchment Ecological Trust
- Maungatautari Reserve Committee
- Port Waikato Community Resilience Strategy Group
- State Highway Three Working Group
- Thames-Coromandel District Council: Shoreline Management Pathway
- The Martha Trust
- Upper North Island Strategic Alliance
- Waikato Mayoral Forum
- Whangamarino Action Plan Working Group
- Whangamarino Response Working Group
- Wharekawa Coast 2120 Joint Working Party

*What level of Crown participation in regional decision-making do you prefer?*

- 2.7. Noting the complexity and scale of the Waikato region, ŌDC supports at least one Crown Commissioner appointment on the Waikato CTB along the following lines:
- a. A commissioner with specific working knowledge or expertise of regional council functions, with their principal role being as professional (independent) advisor to the Mayors.
  - b. Non-voting.
  - c. Appointment costs to be 100% funded by the Crown.
  - d. We also propose Iwi representation on the CTB to reflect the spirit of partnership and the significant economic, cultural, employment and social contribution of Iwi in our region.

*Do you agree that mayors on the CTB should have a proportional vote adjusted for effective representation?*

- 2.8. No. ŌDC supports “one Mayor, one vote”.

*What do you like or dislike about the voting proposal for the CTB?*

- 2.9. ŌDC supports “one Mayor, one vote” for the following reasons:
- a. Simplicity and efficiency of administration and decision making.
  - b. The Mayors are capable of taking regional considerations into account when voting.
  - c. Existing similar arrangements are working well (e.g. the Regional Transport Committee and Civil Defence Joint Committee).
  - d. “One Mayor, one vote” is more democratically representative, and means voting will be genuinely based on merits rather than “strength of constituent” numbers.

*What do you think about the ways that communities crossing regional boundaries could be represented?*

2.10. Not applicable to ŌDC.

*Do you support the proposal to require CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans?*

2.11. ŌDC supports the proposal. However, we make the following comments:

- a. Mayors will need technical support, professional advice, and specific expertise to develop reorganisation plans. This reinforces the inclusion of at least one Crown Commissioner to advise the Waikato Mayors.
- b. ŌDC considers the elected regional councillors may have views and insights that would usefully inform reorganisation plans. We would want to retain the ability to co-opt or appoint existing elected regional councillors to a reorganisation plan development working party.
- c. ŌDC has concerns around single Minister approval of the reorganisation plans, after having gone through a consultation process. While this is portrayed as ensuring alignment with Government direction, it has the potential for consolidation of power and political veto for a reorganisation plan after consultation.

*What do you think about the criteria proposed for assessing regional reorganisation plans?*

2.12. ŌDC supports the criteria. We note the following:

- a. Some of the examples used are “leading” in the sense of appearing to provide a Government preferred outcome.
- b. Joining councils to create bigger scale does not address the problem of why things cost so much. Using the bridge example (affordable now and in the future), smaller communities could afford to build a bridge in the first instance, so this example does not address the question of cost inflation.
- c. We would note that there will be considerable transition costs as Council’s transition to regional reorganisation - while at the same time implementing local waters, RMA replacement acts, new Development Levies, a new Emergency Management Act, and new building reforms – while reducing rates to not more than 4%. We anticipate that without providing additional realistic funding tools, the only way to deliver on this workload will be a combination of: reduced levels of service, increased user fees, and deferred works.

*What do you think about how the proposal provides for iwi/Māori interests and Treaty arrangements?*

2.13. ŌDC considers this proposal is a minimum requirement. Locking in existing treaty settlements and allowing treaty settlements in process to run their course should be a non-negotiable bottom line.

*Any other comments?*

2.14. ŌDC endorses similar submissions made by Taituara, Local Government New Zealand, the Waikato Mayoral Forum and other councils to the extent that those submissions are aligned with our

submission. Where submissions are not aligned, ŌDC notes that this should not be viewed as evidence of councils not working together. Rather, this more appropriately reflects the “local” in “local government” and only reinforces that any regionalisation of governance functions must also accommodate local context, local variances, and local decision making.

2.15. ŌDC supports the need for local government simplification but has concerns around funding and deliverability of the suite of reforms underway at the same time. The amount of reform underway concurrently is unprecedented, and along with financial constraints there will be capacity and recruitment constraints to deliver and implement the suite of reforms.

2.16. **ŌDC advocates that:**

- a. timeframes are reviewed and sequenced to allow a manageable workload across all of the current and proposed reforms, with a whole of Government and whole of system approach; and,
- b. adequate and realistic funding (including Crown contribution for unfunded mandates) is provided and supported to enable the delivery of Government reforms, particularly during transition; and,
- c. Iwi participation in decision making is fundamental and must be incorporated.

END.

Submission approved for release on behalf of Ōtorohanga District Council:



**Mayor Rodney Dow** on Monday, 16 February 2026 ([mayor@otodc.govt.nz](mailto:mayor@otodc.govt.nz))

**Staff Contact:** Tony Quickfall, Group Manager, Regulatory and Growth ([tonyq@otodc.govt.nz](mailto:tonyq@otodc.govt.nz))

**Information only reports****Ngā pūrongo mōhiohio anake**

**DISCLAIMER:** The reports attached to this Open Agenda set out recommendations and suggested resolutions only. Those recommendations and suggested resolutions DO NOT represent Ōtorohanga District Council policy until such time as they might be adopted by formal resolution. This Open Agenda may be subject to amendment either by the addition or withdrawal of items contained therein.

**Item 32** Ōtorohanga District Environmental Scan 2026

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council  
**From** Tanya Winter, Chief Executive  
**Type** **INFORMATION REPORT**  
**Date** 31 March 2026



**1. Purpose | Te kaupapa**

1.1. To receive the Ōtorohanga District Environmental Scan (ES) prepared in support of the development of the 2027/37 Long Term Plan (LTP).

**2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua**

- 2.1. The ES provides background information for considering directions for the 2027/37 LTP and insights into understanding the implications of the decisions being made.
- 2.2. While there is no legislative requirement to prepare an ES it is useful for identifying social, economic, environmental changes affecting the district.
- 2.3. The national and international context in which the 2027/37 LTP is being prepared is at least, if not more, uncertain as the previous plan. In the lead up to the adoption of the next LTP and the first three years of the new plan, major shifts in local government - politically and operationally – are expected. However, the exact nature of these shifts is still being worked on by the government, and the consequences of the changes are yet to be fully understood.
- 2.4. Although the ES is based on the most up-to-date information available, Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) is in a rapidly changing environment with new information coming to hand almost daily. To keep abreast of the changes it will be important to regularly check the assumptions that underpin the LTP for relevance and accuracy in light of any new information.

**3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi**

That Ōtorohanga District Council **RECEIVE** the report titled ‘Ōtorohanga District Environmental Scan 2026’ by Tanya Winter, Chief Executive.

## 4. Discussion | He kōrerorero

### Purpose of an Environmental Scan

- 4.1. Local authorities must have at all times an LTP (Local Government Act 2002 [LGA], s93). Updated every three years, the LTP sets out a council's infrastructure and service priorities for the next ten years, and how it intends to pay for this work.
- 4.2. Prior to developing the LTP, best practice encouraged by Taituarā involves undertaking an ES. Although not required by the legislation, an ES is useful in bringing together political, economic, regulatory, social, and technological factors, trends, and pressures that impact the district. In turn, this helps identify risks and opportunities which inform the assumptions that underpin the LTP and provides an evidential basis for the strategic directions and priorities chosen by a council. A good scan helps ensure the LTP is well informed and future focused.
- 4.3. Appendix 1 shows where the ES fits in the development of the LTP.

### About the Document

- 4.4. The ES (attached as Appendix 2) updates the previous scan adopted by ŌDC in May 2023. Divided into three sections with a covering summary, it takes a big picture look at our district.
  - a. The introduction at the front of the document briefly summarises the progress ŌDC has made to date with the directions set since 2020, highlights the current context in which the 2027/37 LTP is being prepared and identifies key themes and opportunities/challenges for ŌDC over the next ten years.
  - b. Section One provides commentary on the international and national context in which ŌDC is operating and the factors or events that will influence or have a potential to influence the district's future.
  - c. Section Two looks at societal and environmental trends in the Waikato Region and where Ōtorohanga differs from the rest of the region
  - d. Section Three focuses on Ōtorohanga centric information drawing on local data and anecdotal knowledge about people, the economy, and the environment.

### Key Findings

- 4.5. Four overlapping themes are emerging for the 2027/37 LTP:
  - a. *Change* - Years one to three of the 2027/37 LTP will be dominated by change. The pipeline of new legislation proposed and pending for local government will require councils make fundamental changes across all aspects of their business. In some cases, it may mean taking on new functions and responsibilities while in other instances it may mean investigating alternative ways of delivering services.
  - b. *Remediation and resilience* - Although the extent of the damage is yet to be fully understood, it is expected that the flow-on effects of the February 2026 severe weather will be front of mind when preparing the 2027/37 LTP. While the clean-up is underway, remediation and resilience improvements will likely happen over years rather than months. Furthermore, like Cyclone Gabrielle, the February weather event is a reminder of the vulnerabilities of communities to climate change and other hazards.

- c. *Affordability* - Council budgets are likely to be placed under considerable pressure going into this LTP. Not only will cost of implementing change need to be planned for, new roles and responsibilities such as the proposed Combined Territorial Boards have the potential to increase the workloads of elected members and staff alike which in turn will increase costs. In addition, rates capping will impose limits on council spending. More rigorous priority setting may be needed to determine what must, should or could be done within a fiscally constrained environment.
- d. *Relationships* - The good work ŌDC has undertaken since 2020 to build authentic partner relationships needs to continue to achieve the system improvements expected by the government’s proposed reforms. Transparent, open communication with the community will also be vital. Residents need to be informed and engaged in changes to its services to meet new legislative requirements if ŌDC is to retain the connectivity it has built with the community over the past six years.

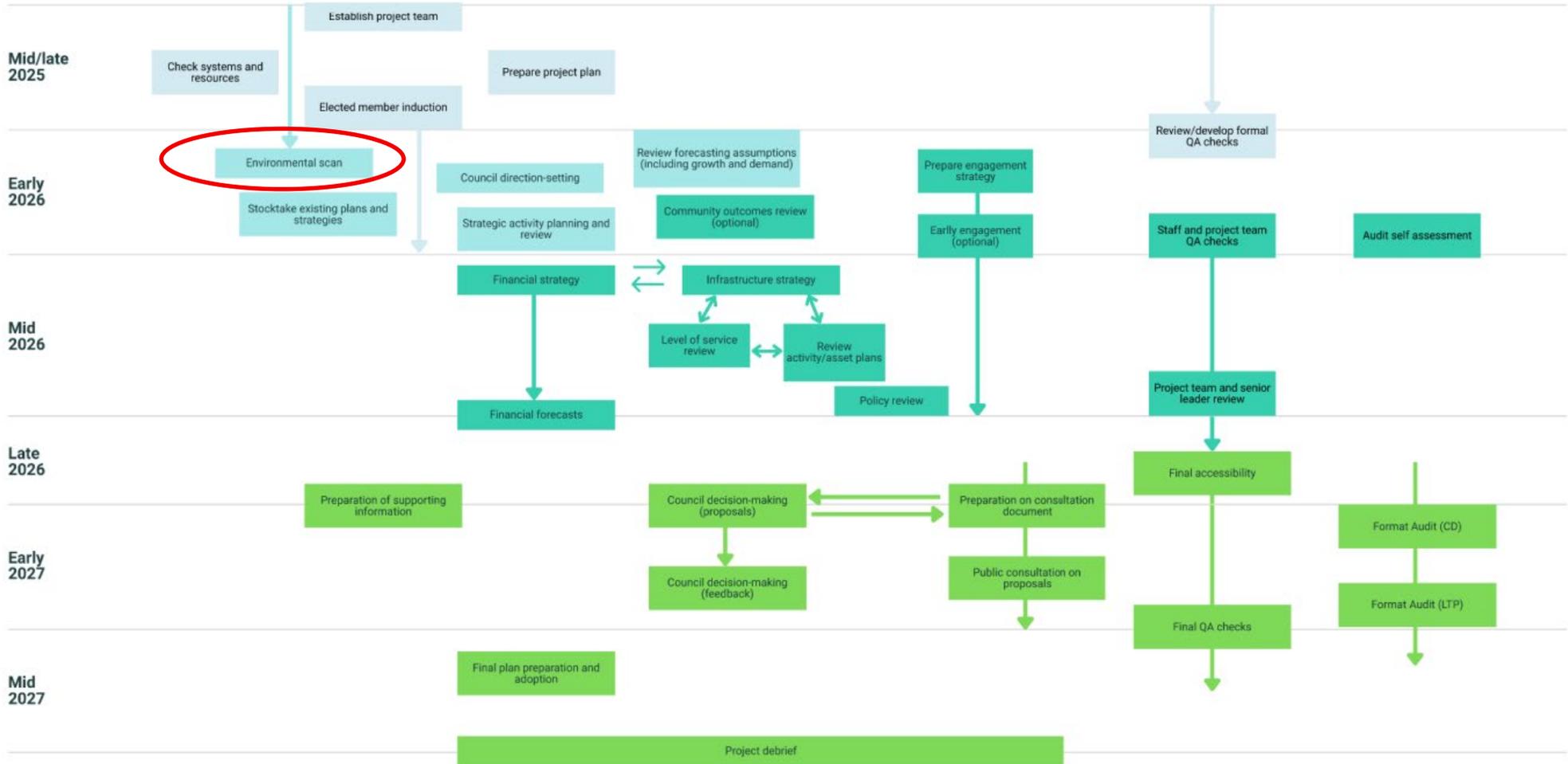
Conclusion

- 4.6. The ES is a snapshot of trends affecting Ōtorohanga District with a local, regional, national and international context. It informs the process by assisting with decision-making in relation to future directions and underpins the assumptions upon which the LTP will be based.
- 4.7. While every attempt has been made to provide up-to-date information, new information will surface as we work through the LTP process. This means that ŌDC will need to be nimble and revise its assumptions and approach as new information emerges. To this end, the ES should be seen as a ‘living’ document.

**5. Appendices | Ngā āpitihanga**

Number	Title
1	LTP Process Map Developed by Taituarā
2	Environmental Scan, Ōtorohanga District Council, 2026

Appendix 1: LTP PROCESS MAP DEVELOPED BY TAITUARĀ



SOURCE: Taituarā (February 2026), JIGSAW 2027: Piecing it Together, page 13



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O  
**ŌTOROHANGA**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL

DATE: MARCH 2026





# CONTENTS

PAGE	
2	<b>ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT</b>
2	• INTRODUCTION
2	• STRUCTURE
3	<b>SUMMARY</b>
3	• WHERE HAVE WE BEEN ...
3	• CURRENT CONTEXT
4	• 2027/37 THEMES
7	<b>SECTION ONE: THE BIG PICTURE</b>
8	• GLOBAL/NATIONAL CONTEXT
8	– GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES
12	– DEEPER DIVE INTO REFORMS AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT
24	• SUMMARY
25	<b>SECTION TWO: CLOSER TO HOME</b>
26	• WAIKATO REGION
26	– WAIKATO PROGRESS INDICATORS (WPI)
29	<b>SECTION THREE: ABOUT US</b>
30	• ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT OVERVIEW
30	– LOCAL GOVERNANCE
31	• GENERAL
31	• PEOPLE
31	– POPULATION
31	– MANA WHENUA AND MĀORI
32	– GROWTH
33	– ENGAGEMENT
34	• ECONOMY
34	– GENERAL
34	– MĀORI
34	– INDUSTRY
35	– INCOME
36	– HOUSING
38	• PLACE
38	– ENVIRONMENT
39	– PLACEMAKING
40	– PUBLIC SPACES
41	– INFRASTRUCTURE
42	– WASTE MINIMISATION AND MANAGEMENT
43	– CLIMATE CHANGE AND EMISSIONS
45	• LAST WORD
46	<b>APPENDICES</b>
47	• ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION CHANGE BY TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY
48	• ANNUAL % CHANGE IN CPI COMPARED TO THE LABOUR COST INDEX
48	• DWELLING UNITS IN WAIKATO/BAY OF PLENTY FORECAST 2025 - 2030
49	• HOW WASTE MOVES TO LANDFILL IN THE CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND
50	• KEY CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS FOR ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT
51	• OVERALL EMISSION ESTIMATES FOR WAIKATO REGION AND BREAKDOWN BY TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES (2021/22), TCO <sub>2</sub> E
52	<b>ENDNOTES</b>

## DISCLAIMER:

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# ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This document updates the Ōtorohanga Environmental Scan (ES) adopted by Council in May 2023. The purpose of the ES and is to help Council take a big picture look at our district – the land, the people and other factors that shape our community and the services we deliver. Together with the Affordability Study prepared for Council by Infometrics, it provides the background for informed decision-making when considering the directions for the 2027/37 Long Term Plan (LTP) and insights into understanding the implications of the decisions being made.

Looking ahead requires local information but, just as importantly, an understanding of external influences and trends is also needed. As well as collating factual and anecdotal information specifically about the district, the ES also provides contextual information on:

- Global trends
- National directions and events with effects felt New Zealand wide
- How our neighbours and the Waikato Region shape what is happening locally.

The ES has an important role in underpinning the assumptions upon which decision making is based. While every attempt has been made to provide up-to-date information, new information will surface as we work through the LTP process. This means that Council will need to be nimble and revise its assumptions and approach as new information emerges. To this end, the ES should be seen as a ‘living’ document.

## STRUCTURE

ES is divided into three main sections.

- *Section One: The big picture*  
Provides commentary on the global and national context in which Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) is operating and the factors or events that will influence or have a potential to influence the district’s future.
- *Section Two: Closer to home*  
Looks at societal and environmental trends in the Waikato Region particularly in relation to areas where alternative approaches are needed because of the direct bearing these matters have on community wellbeing.
- *Section Three: About us*  
Provides Ōtorohanga centric information on current trends drawing on local data and anecdotal knowledge about people, the economy, and the environment.

A summary of the ES is provided below and a table with key trends, opportunities and challenges for the district for the next ten years is also provided.

# SUMMARY

## WHERE HAVE WE BEEN ...

In 2020 Council received some tough messages from both its partners and residents about needing to lift its game and the importance of staying connected to the community. This led to a concerted effort through the COVID years to deliver a broader more inclusive plan for the district based on community wellbeing. These efforts were noted and appreciated by the community and the overriding message to Council for the 2024/34 LTP was *keep to the path you are on currently – nothing flashy or fancy - stay connected to our communities, do the basics well and ensure we are prepared for the future.*

While heeding the community’s message, in both the run-up to and post the release of the 2024/34 LTP, Ōtorohanga, like other councils around the country, was confronted by challenges requiring careful navigation. These included:

- The need to determine a structure for the long term delivery of the district’s three waters services (drinking water, wastewater and stormwater) – a matter that all councils have had to address in light of the findings of the inquiry into Havelock North’s campylobacter outbreak and the government’s response via the Local Water Done Well policy and legislative framework
- Government changes in policy direction for both roading and resource management
- Changing weather patterns impacting how Council plans, maintains and builds things
- Increased costs for the things local government needs to buy (some of which had inflated 30-50% more since 2021).

Confident that it was on the right path and mindful of the challenges ahead, Council’s adopted approach in the previous triennium was *kia mau tātou ki te ara... steady as she goes* and in 2025 the organisation was rewarded for its efforts by being given top marks in Local Government New Zealand’s (LGNZ) Te Korowai programme<sup>1</sup>. Described by Te Korowai Chair Toby Stevenson of being *a shining example of how a small rural council can improve outcomes by embracing change*, organisational performance was essentially lifted from the CCC rating given in 2020 to the Mauri Ora or ‘Thriving’ grade recognising outstanding development across a range of measures.

## CURRENT CONTEXT

### INTERNATIONAL UNCERTAINTY

Looking forward, the landscape for the 2027/37 LTP remains challenging. At the global level uncertainty prevails. Protocols providing clarity and stability between countries have in many instances been disregarded leaving New Zealand and export led regions like the Waikato exposed to market volatility, supply chain disruptions and shifting demand from trading partners.

### SUBSTANTIVE REFORM NATION WIDE

Nationally, the Coalition government has embarked on an extensive legislative overhaul to stimulate economic growth by reducing ‘red tape’, addressing housing and boosting infrastructure. This work is moving at pace in the lead up to the next general election. For local government the proposed legislative changes represent the most significant shake-up since 1989. In the next three years, Council will be required to make substantive decisions for the district – decisions that will affect generations of Ōtorohanga residents to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as CouncilMARK, Te Korowai is LGNZ’s enhanced improvement framework that supports councils through benchmarking, action planning, and evaluations every three years. The programme provides councils with insights and tools to strengthen governance, leadership, decision-making, transparency, and engagement with their communities.

## STRONG SENSE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

Despite concerns at the international and national level, there are indications that the district is in ‘good heart’. According to the Quality of Life Survey 2024, the percentage of people who agree they experience a sense of community is high (76%) for Ōtorohanga district (cf. Hamilton - 38%)<sup>i</sup>. The recent severe storm event (13 February 2026) is evidence of this spirit with the community ‘pulling together’ to support one another. However, the district is not insulated from issues affecting other parts of the country. Inflation and cost of living increases have been difficult for households and Council will need to be mindful of this when determining its programmes for the 2027/37 LTP.

## 2027/37 LTP THEMES

Four overlapping themes are emerging for the 2027/37 LTP.

### CHANGE

Years one to three of the 2027/37 LTP will be dominated by change. The pipeline of new legislation proposed and pending for local government will require councils make fundamental changes across all aspects of their business. In some cases, it may mean taking on new functions and responsibilities while in other instances it may mean investigating alternative ways of delivering services. For accountability purposes new plans and policy documents will need to be developed in quick succession. Even if the legislation before parliament does not progress as planned, Council will still need to make significant adjustments to its operations in the wake of transferring its water assets and services to Waikato Waters Limited (WWL).

Responding to and implementing the government’s legislative changes will need to be adequately resourced. At this stage there is no indication that external funding will be made available to assist with implementation and Council may need to factor this into its LTP budgets.

It is important that Council’s partners and the community are aware of and engaged in any structural or system change processes as adjustments to community expectations and relationships may be necessary. Open, timely communication will help maintain the trust between ŌDC and its partners and retain the community connectedness which ŌDC has worked hard to establish.

### REMEDICATION AND RESILIENCE

Although the extent of the damage is yet to be fully understood, it is expected that the flow-on effects of the February 2026 severe weather will be front of mind when preparing the 2027/37 LTP. While the flood waters have receded and the clean-up is underway, remediation and resilience improvements will likely happen over years rather than months.

Like Cyclone Gabrielle, the February weather event is a reminder of the vulnerabilities of communities to climate change. In the previous triennium ŌDC mapped out a pathway for helping district communities to be stronger and more resilient to the effects of climate by adopting a Climate Change Response Plan (CCRP). The goals and actions laid out in the CCRP will help identify funding priorities for the next 10 years.

The response to severe weather events has also been a focus of national attention along with the desire to systematically manage rising climate risks. Government’s National Adaptation Framework (NDF) – soon to be backed by legislation – was released in October 2025. The framework makes it clear that territorial authorities have responsibilities for leading local hazard responses and individuals, and private entities will be expected to manage their own risks. Furthermore, councils will be required to prepare adaptation plans for high risk areas.

On the back of the Government Inquiry into the 2023 North Island severe weather events, a new emergency management bill is also currently before Select Committee which is intended to ‘lift the bar’ in the standard of emergency management. Both the NDF and the new emergency management legislation will need to be incorporated into the 2027/37 LTP.

### AFFORDABILITY

Council budgets are likely to be placed under considerable pressure going into this LTP. Not only will the cost of implementing change need to be planned for, new roles and responsibilities such as the proposed

combined territorial boards (CTB) have the potential to increase the workloads of elected members and staff alike which in turn will increase costs.

Running counter to the need to adequately resource change, rates capping will impose limits on council spending. Government has already signalled that councils will need to set their 2027/37 LTPs to ensure that year three (2029) and beyond is within the target range. Although councils already exercise their existing duty to be fiscally prudent, more rigorous priority setting may be needed to determine what must, should or could be done within a constrained environment.

## RELATIONSHIPS

*“ŌDC is good at building relationships and not too proud to ask for help, in a partnership way - not a servile way”.*

Source: Te Korowai

As noted in the Te Korowai Independent Evaluation Report for ŌDC, *“Council ... appears to have a solid reputation, potentially due to its authentic, committed and open approach to local and regional relationships”<sup>ii</sup>*. This good work needs to continue as inter council collaboration and quality partner relationships require councils to act together to achieve the system improvements expected by the government’s proposed reforms. Good relationships do not just happen – they need leadership, time and commitment to be effective.

Transparent, open communication with the community will also be vital as ŌDC steps through the 2027/37 LTP. To meet new legislative requirements, changes in levels of service or service delivery methods may be necessary. Residents need to be informed and engaged in these changes if ŌDC is to retain the connectivity it has built with the community over the past six years.

**Table 1: Summary - Challenges/ Opportunities**

THEME	ISSUE	CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES
CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volume and breadth of proposed and pending changes to legislation affecting local government</li> <li>• Shift of water supply and wastewater services to WWL</li> <li>• Structural reform of local government removing regional councils and refocussing local authorities on ‘the basics’.</li> <li>• Proposed system changes for all councils narrowly focused on economic growth and reduced spending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to and implementing the government’s legislative changes will need to be adequately resourced.</li> <li>• Greater financial flexibility enabling ŌDC to focus on other services</li> <li>• Potential for stranded costs to affect other functions of council.</li> <li>• Substantive changes to the configuration of local councils (e.g. amalgamation).</li> <li>• Potential for new roles and responsibilities for territorial local authorities.</li> <li>• Maintaining localism.</li> <li>• Limited opportunity to progress Council’s placemaking role to shape cohesive, connected, resilient communities.</li> </ul>
REMEDICATION & RESILIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remediation requirements following the 13 February 2026 severe weather event.</li> <li>• Infrastructure and community resilience to natural hazards.</li> <li>• Preparedness for future pandemic and other emergencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the extent of the damage and costs of clean-up may take time.</li> <li>• Reinstatement of infrastructure may take years in some instances.</li> <li>• Infrastructure in some high-risk area may no longer be viable and solutions focussing on adaptation may be required.</li> <li>• Ongoing costs of incorporating resilience into design and construction when reinstating existing or building new infrastructure.</li> <li>• Local government is expected to have increased responsibilities for ‘on the ground’ operations under new emergency management legislation.</li> <li>• Recent severe weather event provides an opportunity to review local systems and procedures.</li> </ul>
AFFORDABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable investment in district services and infrastructure under a rates cap</li> <li>• New roles and responsibilities (e.g. development of adaptation plan for areas at high risk to the effects of climate change) without commiserate funding.</li> <li>• Some residents are struggling more than others with rises in the cost of living.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous priority setting needed (have to do, must do, like to do)</li> <li>• Opportunities to investigate alternative methods for service delivery (e.g. shared services, contracting to other organisations)</li> <li>• More responsibility within a fiscally constrained environment</li> <li>• Council will need to be mindful of effects on household budgets when determining its programmes for the 2027/37 LTP.</li> </ul>
RELATIONSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of the Rangiātea Māori ward.</li> <li>• Economies of scale and the efficient, effective delivery of services.</li> <li>• Maintaining local community trust and connectivity through a period of substantive change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes an important communication channel with Iwi/Māori.</li> <li>• Exploration of additional mechanisms for fulfilling legislative and partnership obligations to iwi/Māori.</li> <li>• Collaborative approaches enabling affordable service delivery (e.g. waste management, provision of some regulatory services)</li> <li>• Continuation of open communication and engagement</li> </ul>



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O  
**ŌTOROHANGA**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## SECTION ONE: THE BIG PICTURE

- GLOBAL/NATIONAL CONTEXT
- SUMMARY

# GLOBAL/NATIONAL CONTEXT

The national and international context in which the 2027/37 LTP is being prepared is as uncertain as the previous plan. In the lead up to the adoption of the next LTP and the first three years of the new plan, major shifts in local government - politically and operationally – are expected. However, the exact nature of these shifts is still being worked on by the government, and the consequences of the changes are yet to be fully understood.

This section looks at external influences on Ōtorohanga District from an international and national perspective. First, it updates what has changed with respect to the ‘wicked problems’ used in the previous ES to describe key concerns troubling nations, communities and individuals. A closer look is then taken of the New Zealand government’s reforms from 2023 onwards both in terms of impact on and implications for future directions for ŌDC.

## GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Eight decades on from the formation of the United Nations – the cornerstone of the multilateral system of global governance – the international landscape has profoundly changed. The rules based economic order that has guided the world for much for post war area until the COVID pandemic has waned. Global trade is being unravelled, as evidenced by the tariffs introduced by the Trump administration in the United States in April 2025, and there has been a radical reduction in the support for the developing economies eroding their ability to participate in global growth.

### WICKED PROBLEMS

Speaking at the 4th Aotearoa New Zealand Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit in 2023, Sir Peter Gluckman<sup>2</sup> outlined seven interlinked, complex concerns troubling nations, communities, and individuals (see Figure 1). Although progress may have been made by some nations on aspects of the issues posed for societies, with the exception perhaps of the loss of trust in elites, these issues remain as relevant today as they were in the 2023. An update of the seven concerns is provided below.

Figure 1: Complex Concerns Troubling Nations, Communities and Individuals



<sup>2</sup> Former New Zealand Chief Science Advisor, President of the International Science Council and Director of Koi Tū: Centre for Informed Futures.

## COVID-19 AND FUTURE PANDEMICS

The emergency response phase of the pandemic has ended, but COVID-19 continues to have ongoing health, social and economic effects in New Zealand and the wider global community. In November 2024 the Commission of Inquiry into the pandemic response publicly released its report from its first phase containing some 39 recommendations based on the lessons learnt between February 2020 and October 2022. Delivery of Phase Two is due to the Governor General on 26 February 2026 and will review key decisions made by the New Zealand Government in response to the pandemic in 2021 and 2022<sup>iii</sup>. Commentators warn that the next pandemic may not be as far away as we think and have urged the Government to begin implementing the recommendations from Phase One now rather than waiting for Phase Two to be finalised.

*“The way we think of earthquakes in New Zealand, we think about the magnitude and the time between events. I think this is the right way to start thinking about pandemics. They are going to come along every couple of decades. ... We should start investing if we’re going to be having another pandemic similar to COVID-19 in 10 to 20 years.*

Professor Shaun Hendy<sup>iv</sup>

A conclusion of Phase One of the Inquiry was that preparing options for a future pandemic should be part of the ongoing work of all government agencies. Furthermore, it recommended the development and maintenance of sector pandemic plans. A responsibility of all public agencies, the plans would need to consider what needs to be done to support activity within their respective sectors to keep going safely in a pandemic. The plans would need to complement other sector plans and the ‘all of government’ approach.<sup>v</sup>

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Like other parts of the world, climate change and sustainability pose very real challenges for New Zealand. The most recent State of the Environment Report (April 2025), in its message to readers, notes that *“The report highlights real risks to people, communities and places which, left unaddressed, threaten our livelihoods and quality of life for generations to come”*. These risks include *“... increased pressures ... from extreme storm and weather events driven by the growing impacts of climate change”*.<sup>vi</sup>

New Zealand's response to climate change and sustainability has shifted significantly over the past three years. The coalition government’s approach has moved from the top-down emissions regulations applied by the previous government toward a reliance on market mechanisms and technological solutions. Key policy changes are summarised in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Government Policy Changes in Relation to Climate Change and Sustainability 2023-2026<sup>3</sup>**

### AGRICULTURAL EMISSIONS:

Plans for direct agricultural emission pricing have been abandoned. Government has also signalled an amendment to the 2050 target for biogenic methane reduction from 24–47% to 14–24% from 2017 levels<sup>vii</sup>

### EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME (NZ ETS):

Changes signalled include removing the requirement for ETS settings to align with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement and moving to a biennial decision process<sup>viii</sup>.

### ENERGY AND TRANSPORT:

- The ban on new oil and gas exploration has been lifted.
- Electric vehicle (EV) subsidies were removed in December 2023 and road user charges are expected to be applied to all vehicles from 2027. The government also temporarily reduced clean vehicle standard charges (effective 1 January 2026) for importers to mitigate consumer costs for upwards of two years<sup>ix</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Changes to the Resource Management Act and other government policy directives for local government with respect to climate change are discussed later in this section under the heading Deeper Dive into Reforms Affecting Local Government.

- Government is working on various energy initiatives including actions, via the proposed new planning system replacing the RMA, to boost renewable energy and realise New Zealand’s clean energy potential<sup>x</sup>.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR TARGETS:**

Cabinet agreed (4 November 2025) that the target for the public service to be carbon neutral by 2025 be delayed by 25 years to 2050<sup>xi</sup>.

#### **CLIMATE REPORTING:**

Signals that the mandatory climate-related disclosures (CRD) regime for large financial institutions will be scaled back, reducing the number of companies subject to reporting requirements<sup>xii</sup>.

Although concern has been expressed about the potential impacts of some of the policy shifts noted above, the country remains on track to meet its first emissions budget (2022–2025), largely due to a steady decline in gross emissions and changes in accounting methods. However, more work is urgently needed to achieve future reductions. He Pou a Rangī (Climate Change Commission) advises that Government needs to act “... to reduce risk for the second emissions budget and get on track for the third budget and 2050” as there are significant risks that the target will not be met without further action<sup>xiii</sup>.

#### **SOCIAL COHESION AND MENTAL HEALTH**

As noted in the 2023 ES, Sir Peter Gluckman commented at the SDG Summit that “*Societal resilience is dependent upon social cohesion*” and that he believed that New Zealand as a nation needed to focus on building social and democratic trust and this meant “*local empowerment and rangatiratanga*” (February 2023).

The social cohesion concerns heightened during the COVID-19 years have not dissipated with time. According to the Ministry of Social Development’s Social Cohesion Report 2024, trust in others remains strong (i.e. families, whānau and communities) but “... many people do not feel that their voice is heard in political decision-making” and that “... trust in New Zealand’s institutions ... has declined in recent years”.<sup>xiv</sup> This has shown up in communities with the rise of Sovereign Citizens, Sheriffs and other self-appointed anti-bureaucracy advocacy groups. Extreme examples of these groups have resulted in attacks on council elected members and staff.

The number of young people experiencing psychological distress has also continued to remain high over the past three years. The Ministry of Health reported in their 2021/22 annual survey of New Zealanders that the nearly one quarter (23.5%) of young people (15-24 year olds) experience high levels of mental distress<sup>xv</sup>. The percentage dropped slightly in the 2024/25 survey to 22.9%<sup>xvi</sup> but remains well above the 5.1% experiencing distress reported in 2011/12<sup>xvii</sup>. While online and offline bullying is a major contributor, broader pressures such as money, living conditions and poor job prospects all affect mental wellbeing<sup>xviii</sup>.

#### **CONFLICT, NATIONALISM AND A FAILURE OF MULTILATERALISM**

Conflict, nationalism and a failure of multilateralism have been touched on in the introduction to this section and will not be further discussed here except to note the implications for global trade.

Weakening institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) create uncertainty and give rise to the potential for trade barriers, impacting farmers and businesses. The Waikato's key export industries (like dairy) depend on stable, rules-based trade. Districts within the region like Ōtorohanga where primary industries comprise almost 40% of the local economy<sup>xix</sup> may be more exposed because of the waning of multilateral agreements and cooperation.

#### **HUMANS AND SOCIETIES COEXISTING WITH TECHNOLOGIES**

The application of new technology has progressed apace over the last three years (2023–2025), driven by a massive, mainstream surge in artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, the near-total rollout of 5G, and a shift towards digital sustainability. AI usage by businesses increased from roughly 48% in 2023 to over 82% in

2025, with 93% of firms reporting increased worker efficiency<sup>xx</sup>. According to the government’s recently released New Zealand’s strategy, AI could add \$76 billion to GDP by 2038<sup>xxi</sup>.

Technology’s role in strengthening modern communities is evolving and local government is increasingly investing in the opportunities it offers to boost efficiency, improve services (online portals, chatbots for information), and manage infrastructure predictively. Recently, Hutt City Council won the coveted Innovation Award at the Te Hapai Hapori/Spirit of Service Awards 2025, for its AI-Volution initiative which has reclaimed 44,000 staff hours per year, made \$900,000 in annual savings, and enabled faster, more responsive services for residents.<sup>xxii</sup>

While there are measurable advantages of applying cutting edge technology to service delivery, careful consideration is crucial before applying digital solutions. Not only are there privacy issues, ethical implications and the need to ensure the technology is inclusive and accessible, the disadvantages of reduced human to human interaction needs to also be carefully weighed.<sup>xxiii</sup>

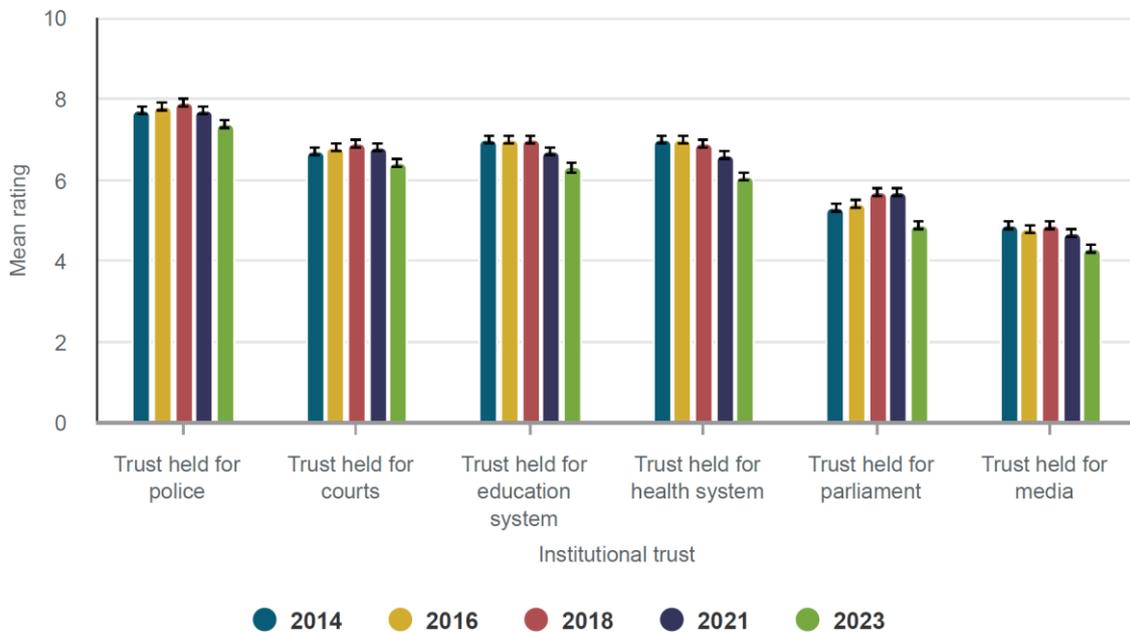
### LOSS OF TRUST IN ELITES INCLUDING ACADEMIA AND SCIENCE

During and post the COVID-19 pandemic there was strong criticism of science and science-led policies from some quarters. However, recent a global study released in early 2025<sup>4</sup>, has found that this view is not widely held and that people in most countries, including NZ, hold science in high regard and want scientists to be more involved in policy decisions<sup>xxiv</sup>. According to the study, Aotearoa New Zealand ranks 9th in the world for trusting scientists and lends weight to the need to ensure that policy making should be evidenced based.

### THE END OF THE NATION STATE

Public trust and confidence in the institutions and systems of government that underpin a nation are essential for survival of the state. Internationally, New Zealand consistently ranks amongst the top nations for trust and confidence in its state institutions alongside Denmark and Finland<sup>xxv</sup>. However, as noted above, data released in September 2024 from Stats NZ’s 2023 General Social Survey (GSS) shows a measurable decline by New Zealanders in trust in key institutions like the health and education systems, parliament, media, police and courts<sup>xxvi</sup>.

**Figure 3: Institutional Trust, Mean Rating Out of 10, 2014 to 2023**



Error bars represent variability in estimates and have been calculated using rounded numbers.

Source: Stats NZ

<sup>4</sup> Nature Human Behaviour 9, 713-730 (2025)

Although trust and confidence have slipped since 2018 (refer Figure 3), this does not mean a decrease in the respect New Zealanders have for the rule of law and the fundamental principles of the nation state. Rather, public trust in the functioning of specific government and social institutions is likely to be behind the decrease linked to factors such as the effects of global events (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic), increased political polarization, and concerns over issues such as the cost of living, housing affordability, and crime.

Issues reported at a national scale may not always reflect the experience of local communities. Data later in this ES<sup>5</sup> suggests that social cohesion in Ōtorohanga District is relatively strong and that people feel a sense of community – a testament to the efforts Council has made to connect with its residents. However, there is no room for complacency, as gains made can quickly be lost should people not feel listened to and see decision making as lacking in openness and transparency. Furthermore, the level of change and the accompanying uncertainty expected over the next three years and beyond will test societal resilience and ŌDC as an anchor institution for the district will need to help the community navigate to these changes.

## DEEPER DIVE INTO REFORMS AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 2023 ONWARDS

#### LABOUR YEARS (OCTOBER 2020 - OCTOBER 2023)

Three years ago the Labour led Government was well advanced in a substantive programme of reforms for resource management, Three Waters (drinking, waste and storm water management) and the future for local government. However, the proposed reforms were short lived. In an unexpected turn of events in early 2023 Jacinda Ardern announced that she would not be contesting the 2023 Parliamentary Elections. Chris Hipkins became the Prime Minister and, following a reshuffle of Cabinet, Nanaia Mahuta was replaced by Kieran McAnulty as the new Minister of Local Government<sup>xxvii</sup>. Sensing the mood of the nation, the message around the reshuffle was a focus on “*bread and butter like the cost of living, education, health, housing and keeping communities and businesses safe*”.<sup>xxviii</sup> A reset of the proposed Three Waters Reforms was also signalled which occurred in April 2023, establishing ten rather than the four water entities originally planned.

Shortly after being installed Chris Hipkins and his cabinet were severely tested by two major weather events which impacted Te Ika a Maui (the North Island) – Cyclone Hale in January followed by Cyclone Gabrielle in February. While communities were affected throughout the North Island, Northland, Auckland, parts of the Waikato, Tairāwhiti, Bay of Plenty, Hawke’s Bay, and the Tararua District fared the worst. A national state of emergency was declared on 14 February 2023 in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle - only the third time such a declaration has been made, with the previous two being for the Christchurch earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>xxix</sup>.

Heading into the 2023 general elections, like the rest of the world, New Zealanders were feeling, and continue to feel, the effects of the post COVID squeeze on household budgets. The consumers price index (CPI) increased to an annual high of 7.3 percent in June 2022 - the biggest annual movement since a 7.6 percent increase in the year to June 1990 (see Figure 4). Main drivers of the increase included housing and household utilities due to rising prices for construction, rentals for housing, and local authority rates.<sup>xxx</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Section Two: Closer To Home, Regional Context, page 28.

**Figure 4: Consumers Price Index, Annual Percentage Change, June 1990 - September 2022**



The cost of doing business rose significantly for local government during this period – well beyond CPI<sup>6</sup>. This was due to the specialised nature of the goods and services purchased by local government to build, renew or maintain needed infrastructure. Furthermore, the remediation of roads, bridges and other community assets required following the cyclonic events earlier in the year compounded the need for substantive rate rises in many districts. Councils were aware going into the preparation of their LTPs that substantive rises were required to meet the basics and scrutinised budgets for opportunities to cut back where possible.

### NATIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT'S REPEAL OF LABOUR'S REFORMS NOVEMBER 2023 – JUNE 2024

Following the formation of the coalition government between the National, Act and New Zealand First parties in November 2023, the new Cabinet immediately set to work agreeing a ‘100 Day’ plan, getting advice on policy design and implementation, commissioning legislation to be drafted and working out its agenda for the year.

By June 2024, when Ōtorohanga along with many other district councils adopted their 2024/34 LTPs, the coalition government had repealed a number of laws developed under Labour, halted work on various bills and introduced legislation to progress new policy directions. This meant having to be ‘fleet of foot’ to incorporate changes to the underlying information supporting the LTP. It also meant that aspects of our work programme were left in limbo awaiting clarity from government on the direction it was proposing to take.

Table 2 below lists the changes that affected ŌDC and other councils at this time.

**Table 2: Legislation Repealed/Changes in Policy Directions by Coalition Government December 2023 - July 2024**

DATE	LEGISLATION/POLICY DIRECTION REPEALED	EFFECT
2023 DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling and walking</li> <li>Natural and Built Environment Act 2023</li> <li>Spatial Planning Act 2023</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NZTA halts work on many projects previously funded.</li> <li>Temporary reversion to the RMA 1991 while amendments and ultimately replacement of the RMA were worked on.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Bridges are 38% more expensive to build, sewage systems are 30% more, and roads and water supply system are 27% more. (Source: Infometrics, Analysing increases in local government costs for Local Government New Zealand, February 2024).

2024	
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Withdrawal of the Electoral (Lowering Voting Age for Local Elections and Polls) Legislation Bill</li> </ul>
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water Services Entities Act 2022</li> </ul>
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NZTA confirms increased ringfenced funding for pothole prevention</li> </ul>
JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2024</li> </ul>

### BACK TO BASICS

Post June 2024, the government switched its attention from ‘unpicking’ the work of the previous government to focussing on the road ahead. Speaking to Local Government New Zealand’s (LGNZ) Annual Conference in August 2024, the Prime Minister and other ministers outlined the government’s substantive programme of reform proposed for local government. “*New Zealand*”, Christopher Luxon stated, “*faces big infrastructure challenges – water, transport, resilience. And each of those will be absolutely critical to get right*”. Central government was doing its bit and “... *it was time for local government to do theirs...*” and align local priorities with the national objective of economic growth. Councils were exhorted to ‘*rein in the fantasies*’, focus on core services and exercise fiscal prudence.<sup>xxxii</sup> The government’s proposed work programme included making infrastructure and housing easier to build as well as system reforms to improve transparency and accountability for ratepayers. New funding tools were put on the table providing local government met certain conditions.

Soon after the conference the pace of change stepped up another notch and, with the passing of the coalition government’s replacement water legislation in September 2024, local body politicians braced themselves in readiness for making some of the most difficult decisions since the 1989 reorganisation of local government. Major changes to the building consent system were also signalled at this time <sup>xxxii</sup> and later in the same year (December) Government’s phased approach to the reform of the RMA began taking shape with the passing of the Fast-Track Approvals (FTA) Act.

The first half of 2025 was consumed with councils sorting future models for the delivery of water services to meet the legislative deadline of 3 September 2025. Even before the ink was dried on the new water services delivery plans (WSDPs) a slew of bills were introduced to the House by the government toward the end of the calendar year with promise of yet more to come in the first six months of 2026. At a LGNZ All of Government meeting at the end of 2025, attendees were told that the suite of reforms coming would have us “*running around like our pants were on fire*”<sup>xxxiii</sup>. Included in the mix was local government structural and funding reforms, further phases of both the RMA and building reforms, and climate change and emergency management. The government is aiming for proposed and pending legislation to be passed before the general elections later in 2026.

Table 3 at the end of this section summarises the main bills affecting local government currently before parliament. Pending legislation signaled by the government is also summarised (refer Table 4)<sup>7</sup>. A brief overview of the changes in the various work streams affecting local government and implications for ŌDC are discussed below.

<sup>7</sup> NOTE: The proposed or pending legislation included in these tables is limited to matters that have moved beyond a cabinet intention and where draft legislation has been introduced to parliament or an early draft has been released for public feedback.

## LAND TRANSPORT

NZTA released the 2024/34 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP)<sup>xxxiv</sup> in early September 2024 giving effect to the government's policy directions for roading. Key components of the NLTP included the reintroduction of the Roads of National Significance (RoNS), and a focus on road maintenance and pothole prevention. Just prior to the release (August 2024), ŌDC was formally advised by NZTA, as were other councils, that its funding allocations for the next three years would be below what was needed to deliver on its planned programme of works. For ŌDC this equated to an average annual shortfall of \$3.565M and while some activities were allocated manageable reductions (e.g. pothole prevention) others were reduced by two thirds (e.g. walking and cycling) or completely removed (i.e. low cost/low risks new works). To accommodate the shortfall, ŌDC's had to modify its programmes and the planned spending on footpaths and road safety activities was substantially reduced.

Going into the 2027/37 LTP, it is anticipated that the national policy direction for land transport will remain unchanged.

## WATER

Passed in September 2024, the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 (WSPAA)<sup>8</sup> gave all councils 12 months to prepare a Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) setting out the future water services delivery model for their respective district including how and when the model would be implemented.

After careful analysis and consultation with the community, ŌDC decided that its preferred model for delivery of water supply<sup>9</sup> and wastewater services would be via WWL – a joint council owned water services company<sup>10</sup>. Stormwater services, it was agreed, would continue to be delivered 'in-house'. Having made this decision, ŌDC submitted its WSDP to Minister of Local Government and approval was subsequently granted on 17 September 2025.

At the time of writing this ES, the establishment board for WWL had been appointed and a permanent chief executive was being recruited. Work was also underway to prepare for early mover councils (South Waikato, Waipā and Waitomo) to transfer their respective water services to the new company on 1 July 2026. Ōtorohanga is scheduled to transfer to the new arrangement on 1 July 2027.

The delivery of water services via a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) will significantly change the residual council's functions, shifting its role from a direct service provider to that of a strategic shareholder. While losing direct operational control, council will gain some financial flexibility enabling it to focus on other services. Other impacts of the transfer of services and assets to WWL include stranded costs potentially affecting the other functions of council. There may also be some duplication as Council will have to retain inhouse expertise for stormwater in addition to contracting services from WWL.

## BUILDING

In October 2024, the Building and Construction Minister, Chris Penk, flagged a range of reforms to get the construction sector "*firing on all cylinders*"<sup>xxxv</sup>. With work already underway and more in the pipeline, legislative and regulatory changes to streamline the building consent process, drive down prices for building products and construction generally, and make building easier were expected to be rolled out over the next

<sup>8</sup> This legislation has subsequently been superseded by the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 covering the structural, operational, planning and reporting arrangements for service delivery by water organisations.,

<sup>9</sup> Water supply services, under Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, means water supplied to consumers intended to be used as drinking water (WSA S4). ŌDC will continue to administer the four water supply schemes in rural areas that supply water primarily for agricultural purposes on a 'trickle feed' basis.

<sup>10</sup> The seven WWL shareholding councils are Hauraki, Matamata Piako, Ōtorohanga, South Waikato, Waipā, Waitomo and Taupō District Councils. WWL is the largest of the multi-council CCOs to be established for the delivery of water services in the country.

18 months. While freeing up the sector, measures to hold licensed building and construction professionals to account for the quality of their work were also proposed<sup>11</sup>.

The implications of the building sector changes for councils include:

- Fewer, if any, consents to process and monitor due to easing of consent conditions, and the intention to introduce legislation in 2026 making it simpler for Building Consent Authorities (BCAs) to voluntarily consolidate their functions<sup>xxxvi</sup>. Furthermore, reductions in consent processing by individual councils may occur because of increased inter council competition for building consent work<sup>12</sup> and privately owned BCAs taking on the role previously the domain of councils<sup>13</sup>.
- Easing the burden on ratepayers by scrapping the current joint and several liability model for dealing with building defects and replacing it with a proportionate liability model<sup>xxxvii</sup>.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

After repealing the previous government's reforms (Phase One), the coalition government set about making its own amendments to the RMA legislation and introduced 'fast-track' laws to speed up approvals for major infrastructure, housing, and energy projects (Phase Two). Legislation was also passed in August 2025, referred to as 'Plan Stop', halting most local council district plan reviews and changes until 2027 by which time implementation of a replacement for the RMA was expected to be in place. As part of Phase Two, new/updated national direction instruments<sup>14</sup> have been or are to be issued to make it easier for councils to plan and deliver infrastructure and to support primary sector growth under the current RMA (e.g. for housing, telecommunications, land use). The first tranche came into effect on 15 January 2026, and a second tranche is expected to be considered by Cabinet in early 2026.

Phase Three of the coalition government's reforms involves replacing the RMA entirely with two new acts:<sup>15</sup>

- A Planning Act which establishes a framework for planning and regulating the use, development and enjoyment of land
- A Natural Environment Act which provides a framework for the use, protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Both bills were introduced to Parliament in December 2025 with the intention of being passed into law in 2026. Once enacted there will be fewer effects for councils to manage, fewer consents to process and fewer plans to prepare, and those plans that are required will be completed in a shorter period of time<sup>xxxviii</sup>. Plan making will be regionalised and involve:

- The preparation of a 30-year regional spatial plans to identify growth areas, infrastructure corridors and areas requiring protection
- Regional combined plans - 17 in total – will bring together spatial, land use and natural environment planning in one place.

Work on the new spatial plans is expected to start in early 2027 and take two years to develop followed by the regional combined plans.

## SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS

A year after the Prime Minister's address to the LGNZ annual conference, legislation was introduced to Parliament removing all reference to community wellbeing from the purpose of local government and replacing it with a focus on cost effective provision of local infrastructure, local public service and regulatory functions – it was back to basics. Other changes to the way local government conducts its business were

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Tables 3 and 4 for information on proposed and pending legislation.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Christchurch City Council competing directly with Auckland Council to process consents for projects located in Auckland. (Source: [www.building.govt.nz/about-building-performance/all-news-and-updates/centralised-supermarket-building-consent-service-to-boost-grocery-competition#:~:text=Christchurch%20City%20Council%20will%20provide,inspections%2C%20and%20code%20compliance%20certificates](http://www.building.govt.nz/about-building-performance/all-news-and-updates/centralised-supermarket-building-consent-service-to-boost-grocery-competition#:~:text=Christchurch%20City%20Council%20will%20provide,inspections%2C%20and%20code%20compliance%20certificates))

<sup>13</sup> The first privately owned BCA was registered by MBIE in mid 2025. Source: <https://buildingtoday.co.nz/2025/06/10/first-accredited-independent-provider-to-speed-up-building-consents/>

<sup>14</sup> National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards

<sup>15</sup> A third bill may also be considered for enforcement matters.

also proposed including better measuring and reporting of non financial measures to enable the public to compare performance between councils. Setting a legal limit on rates increases (rates capping) was also flagged with details expected to be announced late 2025 and legislation to follow in early 2026.<sup>xxix</sup>

Proposed reforms for councils were taken a step further in November 2025 with the release of a draft document ‘Simplifying Local Government’ setting out structural changes to reshape councils<sup>xl</sup>. The model proposed by the government was for the removal of regional councillors and, as an interim step, the formation of combined territories boards (CTB) comprised of the mayors for the region. The role of the CTB would be to develop a plan – to be known as the regional reorganisation plan - about how the councils of the region would work together to deliver local government responsibilities. This could involve amalgamations, shared service or other arrangements. The regional reorganisation plan – would be independently assessed and approved by the Minister of Local Government before being implemented. CTBs would be given two years from the date of enactment to prepare their reorganisation plans<sup>16</sup>.

The package of reforms put forward by the coalition government foreshadow the most significant changes in the structure and purpose of local authorities since amalgamation in 1989. Council will need to consider its approach to these reforms along with the other changes affecting local government. Will it be a trail blazer, run with the pack or be a straggler?

### CLIMATE CHANGE<sup>17</sup>

Coming into power in the aftermath of Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle and at a time when international unity is at a low ebb following the United States withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the coalition government has proposed a number of significant changes to New Zealand’s climate change settings. Of particular importance to local government was the release of the inaugural National Adaption Framework (NAF) for climate change in October 2025. The NAF is built on four pillars and includes 16 actions to ensure New Zealand is prepared for the effects of climate change.<sup>xli</sup>

A central pillar of the NAF is clarification of the roles and responsibilities for local government with respect to natural hazard risks – councils lead the local response while central government sets the rules. There are a number of substantive actions for councils under this pillar including the development of adaptation plans in the highest priority areas to help people understand the risks, how they will be managed and what investment will be made to address the risks. Property buyouts after major disasters will be a ‘thing of the past’ and individuals and businesses will be expected to manage their own risks<sup>xlii</sup>.

Legislation<sup>18</sup> to support the implementation of the NAF is expected to be introduced to Parliament in early 2026.

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In April 2024, the coalition government pushed pause on the emergency management bill introduced by Labour<sup>19</sup>. The *Report of the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events*, had just been published and had found that the emergency management system had “failed in places and was not fit for purpose”<sup>xliii</sup>. With work already started, government spent the next 18 months strengthening New Zealand’s overarching emergency management legislation, and the Emergency Management Bill (No 2) had its first reading on 9 December 2025.

As with climate change, clarification of the roles of central and local government is a key component of both the new bill and the accompanying Emergency Management System Improvement Programme (EMSIP). Essentially, national standards will be set and enforced for all local authorities with regional teams established to provide in-person support to enable councils to operationalise delivery locally. The aim is to bridge the gap between regions and ensure all communities have the same level of safety and readiness.<sup>xliv</sup>

<sup>16</sup> It is anticipated that delivery of plans to the Minister of Local Government is likely to be early to mid 2029.

<sup>17</sup> See also Figure 2, page 9.

<sup>18</sup> Climate Change Response (Efficiency and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill.

<sup>19</sup> Emergency Management Bill (No.1)

At the time of writing this ES the northern and eastern parts of the North Island were experiencing the effects of severe weather with several districts having declared pre-emptive and precautionary states of emergency. This was followed on 13 February 2026 by an event which significantly impacted Ōtorohanga District<sup>20</sup>. Commentators have described the weather warnings and subsequent events, particularly at this time of the year (mid – late January), as the new norm. This reinforces the need for communities to be as prepared as possible to minimise the risks and disruption that comes from these events.

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<sup>20</sup> See pages 43 to 44 for further discussion on this event.



**Table 3: Legislative Pipeline - Bills Before Parliament - January 2026**

	BILLS BEFORE THE HOUSE	PURPOSE	EFFECT	STAGE
<b>CORE SERVICES</b>	<p>Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill</p> <p>A second complementary bill is also expected in early 2026 in relation to rates capping (refer to Rates Target Model in Table 3 Pending Legislation below).</p>	<p>Reduce pressure on rates &amp; help address cost of living concerns &amp; a perceived lack of fiscal discipline among councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refocuses the purpose of local government by removing all references to the four aspects of community well-being; reinstates specific core services of territorial local authorities (TLAs)</li> <li>• Better performance measurement via set benchmarks enabling customers to compare the performance of different councils</li> <li>• Ensures core services are prioritised in council spending &amp; delivered in a way that is most cost-effective for households &amp; businesses</li> <li>• Strengthens council transparency &amp; accountability by applying a standardised code of conduct &amp; set of standing orders binding on all councils. CEOs will be required to facilitate information sharing and elected members will be required to work collaboratively to set the council's direction.</li> <li>• Provides regulatory relief for councils through changes to public notice requirements, removal of the requirement to undertake S17A reviews &amp; other matters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awaiting Second Reading</li> <li>• Expected to become law early 2026</li> </ul>
<b>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Bill (PB)</li> <li>• Natural Environment Bill (NEB)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Bill establishes a framework for planning &amp; regulating the use, development &amp; enjoyment of land</li> <li>• Natural Environment Bill establishes a framework for the use, protection &amp; enhancement of the natural environment.</li> <li>• Together the bills replace the RMA.</li> </ul>	<p><b>KEY FEATURES:</b></p> <p><b>Scope</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer effects managed - matters removed from scope include internal site matters, retail distribution effects, visual amenity, competition impacts &amp; the financial viability of a project.</li> <li>• Fewer consents - Fewer activity categories, with low-impact activities no longer requiring consent</li> <li>• All consent conditions must be necessary &amp; proportionate</li> </ul> <p><b>Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 100 existing plans will be reduced to 17 regional combined plans bringing together spatial, land use &amp; natural environment planning in one place</li> <li>• 30-year regional spatial plans will be required to identify growth areas, infrastructure corridors &amp; areas requiring protection.</li> <li>• Plan development time will fall from an average of 6 to 7 years to around 2 years for a regional combined plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Standardisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,175 bespoke zones will be reduced to a nationally consistent set decided by central government.</li> <li>• A comprehensive suite of national standards will be developed for common activities to reduce costs &amp; speed up consenting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When imposing significant restrictions, such as heritage protections &amp; significant natural areas, councils must provide practical relief mechanisms</li> <li>• Clarity about who must be consulted &amp; when, including iwi.</li> <li>• A new Planning Tribunal is to be established to resolve straightforward disputes quickly &amp; at low cost</li> <li>• Clear environmental limits</li> <li>• Centralised oversight of enforcement for consistency across the country<sup>21</sup>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select Committee, with submissions closing on 13 Feb 2026.</li> <li>• Expected to be enacted mid-2026.</li> <li>• If the local government reforms proceed as proposed, combined territories boards (CTB) will be the decision-making body for these new planning instruments (refer Table 4 below).</li> <li>• Each TLA will also develop a land-use plan. These plans will be brought together into a single regional plan, which the CTB will review for coherence &amp; consistency.</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> A third bill may be introduced to cover the establishment of a national compliance and enforcement regulator.





	BILLS BEFORE THE HOUSE	PURPOSE	EFFECT	STAGE
BUILDING	Building and Construction Sector (Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Amendment Bill	Speeds up the consenting process for, and building of, houses in New Zealand by reducing the number of inspections that must be completed for plumbing & drainlaying work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amends the Building Act 2004 &amp; the Plumbers, Gasfitters, &amp; Drainlayers Act 2006.</li> <li>Streamlines the building consent system through a risk-based consenting approach.</li> <li>Introduces an opt-in scheme for qualified plumbers &amp; drainlayers to self-certify that their work complies with the terms of a building consent.</li> <li>Removes the need for a building consent authority inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select Committee</li> <li>Report back to the House due 19 March 2026</li> </ul>
	Building and Construction Sector (Strengthening Occupational Licensing Regimes) Amendment Bill	Ensures licensed professionals in the building & construction sector can be appropriately held to account through complaints & disciplinary processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amends the Building Act 2004 &amp; the Plumbers, Gasfitters, &amp; Drainlayers Act 2006, &amp; the Electricity Act 1992.</li> <li>Reduces the level of oversight by building consent authorities for certain types of low-risk building work by placing greater reliance on the competence and accountability of the professionals undertaking the work.</li> <li>Aims to reinforce expectations of professional conduct &amp; competence, for the delivery of safe, compliant, &amp; high-quality building work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select Committee</li> <li>Report back to the House due 19 March 2026</li> </ul>
	Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Bill	Establishes a more proportionate & risk-based regulatory system for managing earthquake-prone buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System will regulate only high-risk building types in medium &amp; high seismic zones.</li> <li>Buildings in low seismic zones or not high risk will no longer be designated as earthquake-prone &amp; cannot be designated earthquake-prone in future.</li> <li>The pathway used by councils to identify new earthquake-prone buildings after the initial identification period will be narrowed so that it captures only high-risk post-1976 buildings of heavy construction that were completed before commencement of the Bill.</li> <li>Earthquake ratings will no longer be used &amp; a tiered system to better reflect the actual level of risk of individual buildings will be used instead.</li> <li>Councils will be able to grant seismic work deadline extensions of up to 15 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select Committee, with submissions close 16 Feb 2026.</li> <li>Enactment expected late 2026</li> <li>Majority of the provisions are expected to come into force 1 July 2027.</li> </ul>
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	Emergency Management Bill (No 2)	Implements improvements identified by the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events of early 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replaces the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (the CDEM Act).</li> <li>Builds on the legislative framework established by the CDEM Act.</li> <li>Seeks to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the role of communities &amp; iwi/Māori in emergency management</li> <li>Provide for clear responsibilities at the national, regional, &amp; local levels</li> <li>Enable a higher minimum standard of emergency management</li> <li>Minimise disruption to essential services</li> <li>Ensure that agencies have the tools to do their jobs effectively when an emergency happens.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select Committee, with submissions closing on 3 Feb 2026.</li> <li>Expected to be enacted in 2026.</li> </ul>





**Table 4: Legislative Pipeline - Pending Legislation/Policy - January 2026**

	PENDING LEGISLATION/POLICY	PURPOSE	EFFECT	STAGE
STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS	Simplifying Local Government <sup>xlv</sup>	Seeks to make local government simpler, clearer, & more cost-effective.	<p><b>Combined Territories Board [CTB]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional councillors replaced by a CTB (preferred model).</li> <li>Every region will be required to develop a plan (regional reorganisation plan [RRP]) that sets out how councils can work together to deliver services more effectively &amp; efficiently - from shared services to structural reform - &amp; they will be the basis for future decisions about how local government is organised.</li> <li>Population to determine voting rights on CTBs with adjustments for small communities.</li> <li>Roles &amp; functions of CTBs will be similar to current regional councils.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regional Reorganisation Plan (RRP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RRP to be developed within 2 years of the CTB for the region being established.</li> <li>The RRP will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map all council functions in the region</li> <li>Recommend the best delivery model for each function across the region (e.g., shared services, joint council-controlled companies, or amalgamations)</li> <li>Require mandatory consultation with communities, iwi, hapū, Māori, &amp; stakeholders</li> <li>Be approved by the Minister of Local Government.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Roles &amp; Functions Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A government review of regional council roles &amp; functions to be carried out to provide clarity on which responsibilities remain local &amp; which may be either centralised or discontinued.</li> <li>Review to be completed before CTBs are established.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Consultation on proposed reforms closes 20 Feb 2026.</li> <li>Legislation drafting commences mid 2026.</li> <li>Bill is expected to be enacted late 2026/early 2027 when transition to CTBs will begin.</li> </ul>
RATES CAPING	Rates Target Model <sup>xlvi</sup>	Keeping rates affordable for households while ensuring councils can maintain essential services and invest in infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model part of Government's local government system improvements programme.</li> <li>Applies to all sources of rates (general rates, targeted rates, uniform annual charges), but excludes water charges and other non-rates revenue.</li> <li>Range will be anchored in long-run economic indicators, such as inflation at the lower end &amp; nominal GDP at the higher end. An additional growth component will be added for some councils.</li> <li>Preliminary analysis suggests a rates target range of 2-4% per capita per year.</li> <li>From 1 July 2029, the model will allow for variations in extreme circumstances (eg. responses to natural hazards, a global economic crisis, or other significant events).</li> <li>A variation process will be available for councils needing to raise revenue to pay for things outside of extreme circumstances. Application will be through a regulator.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils will need to set their 2027/37 LTPs to ensure that year three (2029) &amp; beyond is within the target range.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation on how to set the target range to be undertaken from Dec 2025 to Feb 2026.</li> <li>Indicative timeline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation to be introduced before the general election (June 2026)</li> <li>Transition period to new regime to run from 2026 to 2029 when councils will be required to consider the rates target when setting rates</li> <li>New regime to come into force from 1 July 2029.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>





	PENDING LEGISLATION/POLICY	PURPOSE	EFFECT	STAGE
FUNDING	Proposed Local Government (Infrastructure Funding) Bill <sup>xlvii</sup>	Seeks to address the housing crisis by land supply, infrastructure & incentives for growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils must prepare a development levies policy that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain plans for using specific land, how development levies are calculated, the method used, &amp; on what basis</li> <li>Sets out what the levies are, where they apply &amp; what infrastructure projects and programmes they will help fund.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Government regulations will be made to enable standardised practices &amp; improve transparency.</li> <li>Cabinet has made an in-principle decision for the Commerce Commission to be the independent regulator for councils charging development levies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure drafts of parts of the proposed Bill released for consultation (Nov 2025 – Feb 2026)</li> <li>Bill to be introduced mid 2026 &amp; enacted Q1 2027</li> <li>Phased approach to implementation to allow local authorities &amp; developers to adapt to the new system.</li> <li>Councils can begin to charge development levies from July 2028.</li> <li>Councils will not be able to apply new development contributions to applications lodged after June 2030.</li> </ul>
CLIMATE CHANGE	Climate Change Response (Efficiency and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill This is the second of two bills that will amend the Climate Change Response Act 2002 (CCRA). The first bill - Climate Change Response (2050 Target & Other Matters) Amendment Bill is already before parliament	Intended to help the country & economy become more resilient to the growing risks of climate change, such as storms and floods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation will give effect to the National Adaption Framework released in October 2025.</li> <li>A key action in the Framework is clarifying the responsibilities for local government by requiring adaptation plans in priority areas.</li> <li>Subject to the Planning Act being passed, the legislation will work with the reformed resource management system, requiring decision-makers to identify priority locations for adaptation planning as part of developing their first spatial plan.</li> </ul>	Bill is expected to be introduced into parliament in early 2026
BUILDING	Building and Construction Sector Amendment Bills <sup>xlviii</sup>	Aims to speed up consenting & ease the burden on ratepayers unfairly footing the bill for damages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will require building design professionals (architects &amp; engineers) to hold professional indemnity insurance.</li> <li>Home warranties will be mandatory for all new residential buildings (up to 3 storeys) &amp; for renovations \$100,000 &amp; above, covering a one-year defect period &amp; a 10-year structural warranty.</li> <li>Disciplinary penalties for Licensed Building Practitioners (LBPs) to be strengthened by increasing the maximum fine from \$10,000 to \$20,000 &amp; the maximum suspension period from 12 months to 24 months.</li> <li>Mandatory home warranties will apply only to residential construction involving Restricted Building Work that requires a building consent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected to be introduced in early 2026.</li> <li>Once passed, there will be a 1 year implementation period.</li> <li>Increased disciplinary penalties for LBPs will be progressed through a separate Bill, with changes expected to take effect in 2026.</li> </ul>





Figure 5: Key Dates for Local Government Implementation of Legislation Pending Government Adherence to December 2025 Indicative Timelines

# LEGISLATIVE TIMELINE

LEGISLATION		2026												2027												2028											
		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
GOVERNANCE	Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill	Service reviews to align with local government purpose																																			
	Simplifying Local Government (pending legislation)													★ Transition to CTBs & development of Regional Reorganisation Plans (2 years from establishment of CTB)												▶											
	Rates Target Model (pending legislation)													★ Transition to rates cap commences 1 Jan 2027 & integrated into 2027/37 LTPs with permanent capping regulatory model in place by 1 July 2029												▶											
	Māori ward disestablished Local Government (Electoral Legislation & Māori Wards & Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2024																									!											
	Long Term Plan 2027/37 prepared & adopted Local Government Act 2002																									!											
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Planning Bill & Natural Environment Bill	★ ★ National policy direction finalised (9 months)												Regional spatial plans developed (15 months) & decided following notification (6 months)												Natural environment & land-use plans developed & notified ▶											
	Resource Management (Duration of Consents) Amendment Act 2025													Consent expiry dates extended to 2 years after the transition period for the new planning system (ie. around 2031)												▶											
	Plan Stop Changes Resource Management (Consenting & Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025	Plan Stop Changes apply until 31 Dec 2027																																			
INFRASTRUCTURE	Local Government (Infrastructure Funding) Bill													★ Policy development - TAs												Development levies phased in ▶											
	Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025													Water Services transition to new service delivery model																							
	• Statement of Expectation prepared & adopted • Water Services Strategy prepared & adopted																									!											

- ★ Legislation expected to be enacted
- ! Action required





## SUMMARY

Since 2019 the global and national context in which local government has operated has been unsettled. While both the 2021/31 and 2024/34 LTPs had unique issues to navigate, the 2027/37 LTP may prove even more challenging given the breadth of changes at the national level ‘in train’ at the time of writing this ES.

The water reforms which began in 2024 will have a profound effect on local government as councils shift to their new structures for the delivery of water services throughout 2026 and 2027. Further change is inevitable regardless of the outcome of the 7 November 2026 general election. The coalition government has every intention of passing a substantive pipeline of legislation relating to local government prior to the election and should a Labour led government be successful in November, the party has indicated that it will not engage in a wholesale ‘repeal and replace’ cycle of all legislation. Labour’s preference to avoid policy disruption and amend rather than entirely repeal some measures<sup>xlix</sup>.

Issues that all councils will need to explore for this LTP include:

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	Back to basics – do the activities we undertake fit the revised purpose of local government and are there some things we should stop doing ... or start doing?
<b>LEVELS OF SERVICE</b>	Have we got our levels of service right – do we need to do more or less of anything?
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	Are there other, more cost-effective ways of delivering our services (e.g. shared services model, contracting to another agency, system improvements)?
<b>AFFORDABILITY</b>	How do we keep within the government’s parameters? What are the ‘have to do’s’ and what can be delayed without unintended negative consequences?
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>	How do we want to work with our neighbours and Iwi/Māori partners and where do we stand on the future of local government for the region?  How do we maintain connectivity with our community and shepherd them through a period of substantive change when internationally trust in government and social institutions is at a low ebb?



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O  
**ŌTOROHANGA**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## SECTION TWO: CLOSER TO HOME

- WAIKATO REGION



## WAIKATO REGION

Ōtorohanga District makes up almost 8 per cent of the Waikato Region. Although small in comparison to its larger neighbours, the district is strategically located and both influences and is influenced by societal and environmental trends and events affecting the wider region.

This section looks at the most recent scorecard for the Waikato Region measuring social, economic and environmental progress. The differences between the current and the 2022 scorecard used in the previous ES are explored for comparative purposes. It also draws on recently released reports from the Waikato Wellbeing Project and other sources, where appropriate.

While not giving Ōtorohanga specific data, the scorecards provide an indication of how well the region as a whole is doing on key indicators of wellbeing. In doing so, it can provide insight into regional trends and where more focussed effort may be required to facilitate change.

### WAIKATO PROGRESS INDICATORS (WPI)

The WPI is a dashboard of some 32 indicators of the region’s environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing. A new scorecard was released by Waikato Regional Council in June 2025 (see Figure 6).

#### LONG TERM TRENDS

The WPI identifies a number of improving trends from a 2006/07 baseline (i.e. 18 years) and these are listed, in declining order, below. Similarly, worsening trends for the region are also listed.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 5: Waikato Region Long Term Trends 2006/07 - 2024/25**

 POSITIVE	 NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased road safety*</li> <li>• Higher average incomes*</li> <li>• Regional GDP growth*</li> <li>• Decrease in greenhouse gases</li> <li>• Improved perceptions of safety</li> <li>• Growth in te reo Māori speakers**</li>   <li>• More recycling*</li> <li>• Longer life expectancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower frequency of physical activity</li> <li>• Poorer perceptions of community engagement</li> <li>• More waste to landfill</li> <li>• Higher water use</li> <li>• Lower perceptions of cultural respect</li> <li>• More residential expansion onto highly productive land</li> <li>• Lower levels of building activity</li> <li>• Lower levels of social connectedness</li> <li>• Worse perceived health</li> <li>• Higher levels of income inequity</li> <li>• Lower levels of life satisfaction</li> <li>• Lower levels of community pride</li> <li>• Higher levels of crime</li> </ul>

\*Although improving, the region remains behind the national average for these indicators

\*\* Compared with the national average the region has a relatively high percentage of Te Reo Māori speakers

<sup>22</sup> A total of 10 indicators are not listed as there has been no significant change in reported trends .





Figure 6: Waikato Progress Indicators 2025<sup>1</sup>

# Tupuranga Waikato Waikato Progress Indicators



## Scorecard 2025

The Waikato progress indicators (WPI) measures social, economic and environmental progress in the Waikato region.

This scorecard compares latest data with baseline results for each indicator (2006 - 2007). For each of the 32 indicators, results are shown as improving trends, worsening trends or no significant change over the last 16 years. The indicators are grouped by wellbeing theme - economic, social and environmental wellbeing. For further information refer to [waikatoregion.govt.nz/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/)



June 2025 (7660)





## RECENT CHANGES

While some trends over the longer term remain positive such as road safety and incomes, a closer look at the intervening years between this ES and the 2022 ES shows slippage in some areas. The main areas where slippage has occurred include<sup>li</sup>:

- Building activity: Peaking in 2021-22, annual building activity has declined rapidly across the Waikato. This trend has also been apparent in other regions<sup>lii</sup>
- Crime: In recent times the annual number of reported crimes (victimisations) per 10,000 people for the region as a whole has been increasing. Hamilton City had the highest number of victimisations (December 2024) while Waikato District and Ōtorohanga had the lowest rates per 10,000 people<sup>liii</sup>. The region also performed worse than the rest of New Zealand with respect to crime rates<sup>liiv</sup>.
- Income inequality: Although difficult to measure<sup>23</sup> income inequality increased for the Waikato region in 2024 - well above the WPI baseline. However, the results for this indicator are similar to or slightly lower than the New Zealand average for the same period<sup>lv</sup>.

### ŌTOROHANGA BUCKS THE TREND

In addition to crime and income inequity, other social indicators that have declined in recent years include community engagement<sup>24</sup>, community pride<sup>25</sup>, cultural respect, life satisfaction and perceived health. Social connectedness across the region has also been reported as declining, but this may not be the case for Ōtorohanga. According to the Quality of Life Survey 2024, the percentage of people who agree they experience a sense of community in the Waikato region ranged from 38% for Hamilton respondents up to 76% for Ōtorohanga district respondents<sup>lvi</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Due to sub-national sample size and variation in the numbers of very-high-income households in the sample each year.

<sup>24</sup> Note: This indicator measures the percentage of people who agree that the public has influence on local council decisions, using information from the Quality of Life Survey. In 2024 Hauraki District had the lowest level of agree (21%) while Waikato (45%). Source: [www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/about-the-waikato-region/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/community-engagement/](http://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/about-the-waikato-region/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/community-engagement/)

<sup>25</sup> Less than two-thirds (63%) of respondents in the Waikato Region to the 2024 Quality of Life Survey agreed that they felt really happy with the way their local area looks and feels. Source: [www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/about-the-waikato-region/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/community-pride/](http://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/about-the-waikato-region/waikato-progress-indicators-tupuranga-waikato/community-pride/)



## ABOUT US

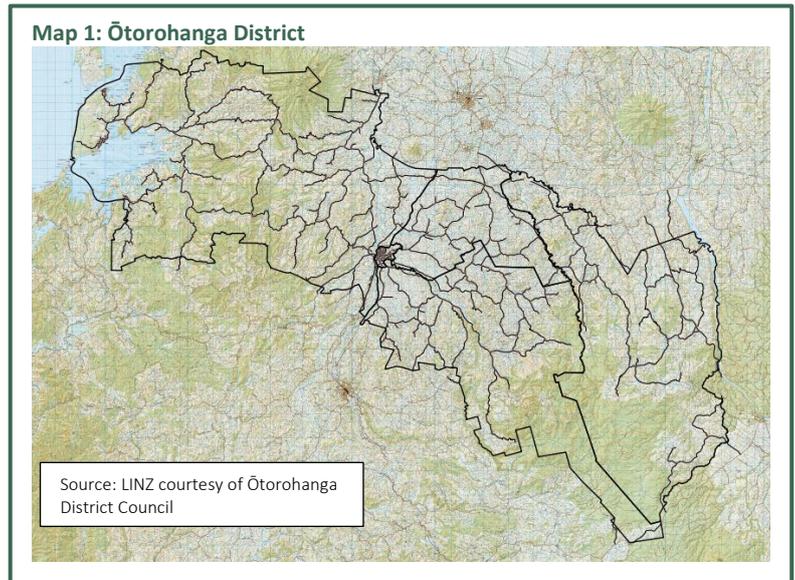
- ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT OVERVIEW
- GENERAL
- PEOPLE
- ECONOMY
- PLACE
- LAST WORD

# ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT OVERVIEW



Ōtorohanga District extends 90 kilometres from the Tasman Sea in the west to the Waikato River in the east – 197,600 hectares (1,976 square kilometres). The district is relatively narrow, averaging about 30 kilometres wide, with two distinct landscapes:

- In the west<sup>lvii</sup> rugged hill country and harbour topography dominate the landscape. This area forms part of the high value natural habitats, landscapes and ecosystems that make up the West Coast Zone of the Waikato Region. The Ōtorohanga section includes the Aotea and Kāwhia harbours – important habitats for shorebirds, shellfish, and nurseries for a range of species of fish. Along its entirety the West Coast Zone contains extensive areas of erosion prone (Class VI and VII) hill country.
- In the east the district’s rolling lowlands are part of the Waipā river catchment - the single largest tributary of the Waikato River.



Ōtorohanga township and the Kāwhia community are the district’s two main urban areas.

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE<sup>lviii</sup>

Ōtorohanga District has been shaped by centuries of events that are as rich as the first soil cultivated by the Chieftainess Whakaotirangi upon the arrival of Tainui waka. The descendants of Tainui waka moved inland from Kāwhia and Aotea harbours, developing the lands and engaging with descendants of other prominent waka that landed across Te Ika a Māui.

1856	Pōtatau Te Wherowhero raised as the first King of Kīngitanga.
1858	King Tāwhiao defines boundaries of the district as Te Rohe Pōtae (Land of the Hat), Aukati line established to resist loss of land and maintain authority
1860	King Tāwhiao elected, from this time forward the territory was called the King Country or the King’s Country by Europeans.
1864	Region was closed off to the Europeans and were only able to pass on and through the land with consent.
1883	Rangatira of Maniapoto started discussions to provisionally open the boundary for the development of the main trunk railway. To protect their interests in the western hill country Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Whanganui tribes put forward a petition requesting that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Native Land Court not operate in Te Rohe Pōtae</li> <li>• Parliament passes a special law to prevent the land from ever being sold</li> <li>• Iwi be allowed to fix the boundaries of, and the tribal boundaries within the area.</li> </ul> Petition was denied.
1885	The Poukai institution established, the Aukati line dissolved, and the district re-opened to Europeans.
1894	Native Rights Bill was drafted with the help of Te Kotahitanga, a pan tribal Māori unification movement.
1900	Māori Lands Administration Act passed, Native Land Courts installed and Native Township Act implemented.
1903	Existing townships of Kāwhia, Ōtorohanga, Te Kūiti and Taumarunui designated native townships.
1922	Ōtorohanga County formed (predecessor to current Council) <sup>lix</sup> .
1956	Ōtorohanga County joined with the northern half of the neighbouring Kāwhia County.
1971	Ōtorohanga County and the urban Borough of Ōtorohanga united to form a new County of Ōtorohanga.
1979	Ōtorohanga County renamed the Ōtorohanga District Council.
2010	Ngāti Maniapoto sign deed to co-govern the Waipā river with the Crown.
2014	Settlement for Raukawa.
2022	Settlement for Maniapoto. Establishment of a Māori Ward for Ōtorohanga District Council.
2025	52.1% of voters in the Māori Ward poll voted for the removal of the Rangiatea Māori Ward in the elections to be held in 2028 and 2031.
Ongoing	Outstanding Waitangi claims remain to be settled throughout the district.





## GENERAL

This section provides a brief snapshot of the Ōtorohanga District and highlights any opportunities or challenges for Council arising from the information. It is divided into three parts – People, Economy and Place

The snapshot has been prepared from sources to hand. It includes online databases, written reports and anecdotal information from Council staff.

## PEOPLE

### POPULATION

In 2025, Ōtorohanga District's population was estimated to be 10,700, the same as for the previous year<sup>lx</sup>. While most people live rurally (7,000), Ōtorohanga township is the largest urban area in the district with a population of 3,240<sup>lxi</sup>. Figures for that same year show that the district's overall dependency ratio was 62.6%<sup>lxii</sup> - 3% higher than the ratio reported in for the district in 2022<sup>lxiii</sup>. In 2025 the district's dependency ratio was also well above (8.4%) the figure for New Zealand as a whole (cf. New Zealand 54.2%). This elevated ratio reflects both the slightly higher proportion of residents aged 65 years and older (17.3%; cf. New Zealand 16.9%) and higher proportion of young people aged under 15 years (21.0%; cf. New Zealand 18.2%)<sup>lxiv</sup>.

The district's population makeup has implications for the demand for services and facilities to meet the needs of both the very young (under 15) as well as older age groups (65 and older). These include demand for education, health, recreation and leisure and care-based facilities.

The rural base of the population also has implications for the delivery of services. The roading network and the availability of key services in smaller rural settlements are important considerations for ŌDC.

## MANA WHENUA AND MĀORI

### GENERAL

The number of people within the district identifying as of Māori decent was estimated to be 3,330 (31.1%) in 2025 (cf. New Zealand – 17.5%) up 0.3% on the previous year<sup>lxv</sup>. The population is relatively young with 27% of Māori aged under 15 years<sup>lxvi</sup>.

Ōtorohanga District falls within the rohe of a number of iwi including Maniapoto, Raukawa, Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Mahuta ki te Hauāuru, Ngāti Te Wehi and Te Patupō, with approximately 17 marae located in different parts of the district<sup>lxvii</sup>.

### RELATIONSHIPS

In addition to the obligations all local authorities have under different Acts of parliament to iwi/Māori<sup>26</sup>, ŌDC is guided in its relationships with its partners by several Treaty of Waitangi related settlements and arrangements. These include:

- The Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010, the Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010, and the Ngā Wai o Maniapoto (Waipā River) Act 2012<sup>27</sup> which enabled the establishment of the Waikato River Authority - a co-governance entity to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations
- The Raukawa Claims Settlement Act 2014 that provided for the establishment of the Raukawa Charitable Trust, responsible for collaborating with local authorities and other stakeholders in managing natural resources and matters of tribal significance

<sup>26</sup> For example, Local Government Act 2002, Resource Management Act 1991 and Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993.

<sup>27</sup> The Ngā Wai o Maniapoto (Waipā River) Act extended the boundaries of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act to include the Waipā River.



- The Maniapoto Claims Settlement Act 2022 which, amongst other matters, established the Te Nehenehenui Trust as the post-settlement governance entity for the people of Ngāti Maniapoto.

The Treaty settlements contain redress mechanisms and agreements which require implementation or action by Council<sup>28</sup>. Implementation of these arrangements, “... ensures that Māori voices are heard and respected in decision-making processes, fostering sustainable and inclusive stewardship for the district”<sup>lxviii</sup>

Building on its efforts<sup>29</sup> since the start of the decade, Council has deliberately prioritised and strengthened its relationship with iwi, hapū, and Māori communities. This hard work was recognised in the findings of the 2024 LGNZ Te Korowai | CouncilMARK assessment, which noted that ŌDC has “...made large strides in creating effective partnerships with iwi.”<sup>lxix</sup> In the past three years, initiatives that have helped continue building trust and deepen relationships have included the contribution of the Rangiātea (Māori Ward) councillors at the decision making table, regular face-to-face engagement on marae, and adoption of the Māori Engagement Framework<sup>30</sup>.

### MĀORI WARD

ŌDC resolved in April 2021 to make provision for a Māori Ward in the 2022 triennial election following the Labour Government waiving the requirement to hold a poll before establishing a ward(s). The coalition government shortly after coming into office repealed Labour’s legislation and, like other councils that established Māori wards without a poll, ŌDC was required to hold a binding referendum on whether to retain the ward. The referendum was run alongside the 2025 local body elections which resulted in electors narrowly voting to remove the ward. This means that the ward is disestablished for the 2028 triennial elections but can be reinstated at a future date providing it is agreed via a poll<sup>lxx</sup>.

Prior to the Rangiātea Māori Ward being disestablished, Council should consider reviewing what additional mechanisms may be required to fulfil its legislative and partnership obligations to iwi/Māori. Thought should also be given to maintaining open dialogue with its iwi/Māori partners as Council steps through the structural and operational changes expected due to the coalition government’s proposed legislative changes.

### GROWTH

Since 2016, Ōtorohanga District’s population has increased gradually from an estimated 10,150 to 10,700. This represents an overall increase of 5.4% - well below the increase for New Zealand (almost 13%) for the same period. Most of the increase over this period has arisen from natural and international sources (+67.6% and +39.5% respectively) with a corresponding loss to internal (-7.1) migration<sup>lxxi</sup>.

Looking out to 2053, Stats NZ have estimated that the district’s is likely to grow by a further 7% (800 people) under their medium variant (see Figure 7). However, under their high variant the population could grow by one fifth (21%) while the low variant suggests a 6% decline over the 30 years.

Although population growth has slowed in recent years, the Waikato region, along with Canterbury and Auckland are the fastest growing regions in the country. In the Waikato much of this increase is occurring in Ōtorohanga’s near neighbours – Waipā and Waikato districts and Hamilton City to the north, and Taupō district to the south (see Appendix 1). The growth in adjoining districts may have flow-on implications for ŌDC.

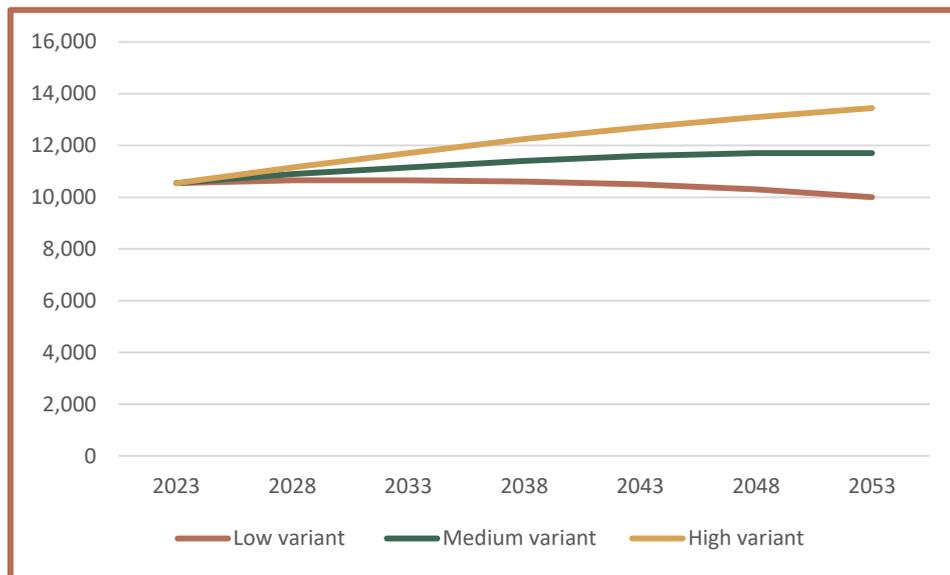
<sup>28</sup> For example, development of Joint Management Agreements for the co-management of resources, preparation of environmental and heritage plans.

<sup>29</sup> Examples of these earlier efforts include introducing a Māori ward in 2022 and the signing of the Deed of Settlement between Maniapoto and the Crown.

<sup>30</sup> A resource to guide Council staff and elected members, assisting them to successfully engage with Māori including iwi, hapū, marae and hapori Māori (ŌDC Māori Engagement Framework, page 8).



**Figure 7: Ōtorohanga District Population Projections**



Source: Stats NZ

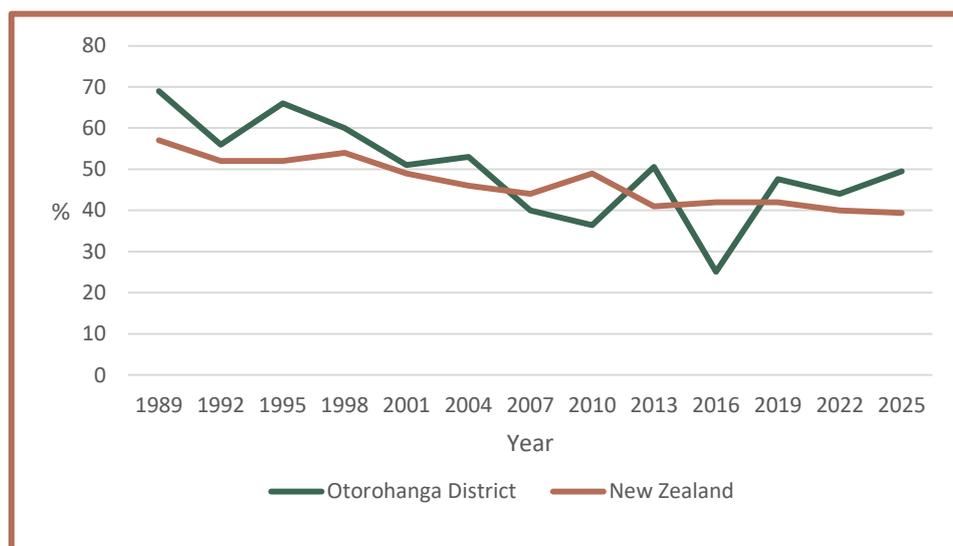
## ENGAGEMENT

As discussed in Sections 2 and 3, social cohesion, trust in public institutions and levels of engagement in democratic processes have been declining but this may not be indicative of views and opinions locally (see pages 11, 12 and 28).

Since 2022, ŌDC has undertaken an annual resident opinion survey about the delivery of Council's services and performance. Like previous years, results the 2025 survey<sup>31</sup> suggest that trust in Council remains strong<sup>lxvii</sup>. Most respondents (77.8%) had an average or above level of trust in Council while 22.2% had only a little bit or no trust in ŌDC<sup>lxviii</sup>.

Voter turnout is not good proxy for community engagement or confidence and trust in councils; however, it is evident that participation in democratic processes locally and nationally has waned since 1989. With exceptions in 2007, 2010 and 2016, voter turnout in Ōtorohanga District has generally been above average rates for New Zealand (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Voter Turnout 1989 - 2025, Ōtorohanga District**



Source: Department of Internal Affairs & Ōtorohanga District Council

<sup>31</sup> The 2025 survey has a margin of error of 9%.





Trust and confidence in institutions grows when communication is open and there is follow through on promises made. ODC's efforts to keep residents informed and involved in district decision making is appreciated as is the positive interactions with staff and elected members. However, as noted in Section One, trust and confidence is fragile and can be quickly eroded. As with its relationships with iwi/Māori, Council will need to redouble its efforts to ensure that the community is well informed and involved if it wishes to retain the trust of its citizens as it works through the challenges of the substantive changes proposed for local government.

## ECONOMY

### GENERAL

“Economic growth in Ōtorohanga District averaged -0.5%pa over the 10 years to 2025 compared with an average of 2.5%pa in New Zealand”<sup>lxxxiv</sup>. However, gross domestic production (GDP) for 2025 for the district was up 2.8% on the previous year (cf. New Zealand, -0.9%), indicative of the Waikato's significant resurgence in its agricultural sector<sup>lxxxv</sup>.

### MĀORI

Nationally, it is recognised that the Māori economy is growing and iwi and post-settlement governance entities who have built up assets and wealth have a major role to play in New Zealand's financial future. Released in 2025, several key findings of Te Ōhanga Māori – The Māori Economy 2023 report were that<sup>lxxxvi</sup>:

- The Māori economic contribution to the New Zealand economy had grown from \$17 billion in 2018 to \$32 billion in 2023
- The Māori asset base had grown from \$69 billion in 2018 to \$126 billion in 2023 – outstripping what was expected by Stats NZ in September 2022<sup>32lxxxvii</sup>
- There were nearly 24,000 Māori-owned businesses in 2023 (almost 4% of the total number of New Zealand business units)

Data on the Māori economy is limited at a regional and district level making it difficult to generalise about influences locally. However, the Te Ōhanga Māori report indicates that 3,240 of Māori-owned businesses in 2023 were in the Waikato – (cf. 13.5% of total Māori businesses)<sup>lxxxviii</sup>. Furthermore, the Waikato was just behind Tāmaki Makaurau in holding the biggest share of the total asset base for Māori<sup>lxxxix</sup>. With substantial assets in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, as well as property, the Waikato contains the largest share of primary sector assets of all rohe<sup>lxxx</sup>.

### INDUSTRY

In 2025, there were 2,037 businesses operating in the district down 0.1% from the previous year (cf. New Zealand up 0.5%)<sup>lxxxi</sup>. Although marginally lower than 2024, the number of business units has increased slightly since 2022 when the last ES was written (up 1.6%). The average number of employees was 2.2 per business in 2025, similar to 2022 (cf. 2.3) but less than the average for New Zealand as a whole (cf. 4.2)<sup>lxxxii</sup>.

Primary industries accounted for the largest proportion of district GDP in 2025 (38.2%) - higher than that for New Zealand (5.8%) as a whole. The dominance of agriculture, forestry and fishing reinforces its importance for the local economy<sup>lxxxiii</sup>. See Figure 9 below.

Looking forward, Ōtorohanga District with its heavy reliance on its primary sector will likely face a stable but somewhat uncertain economic outlook<sup>lxxxiv</sup>. In the most recent *Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries*, the Director General of the Ministry for Primary Industries noted that, “Export revenue reached a phenomenal \$60.4 billion in the year to 30 June 2025...”<sup>lxxxv</sup>. While this is expected to continue, as previously discussed,

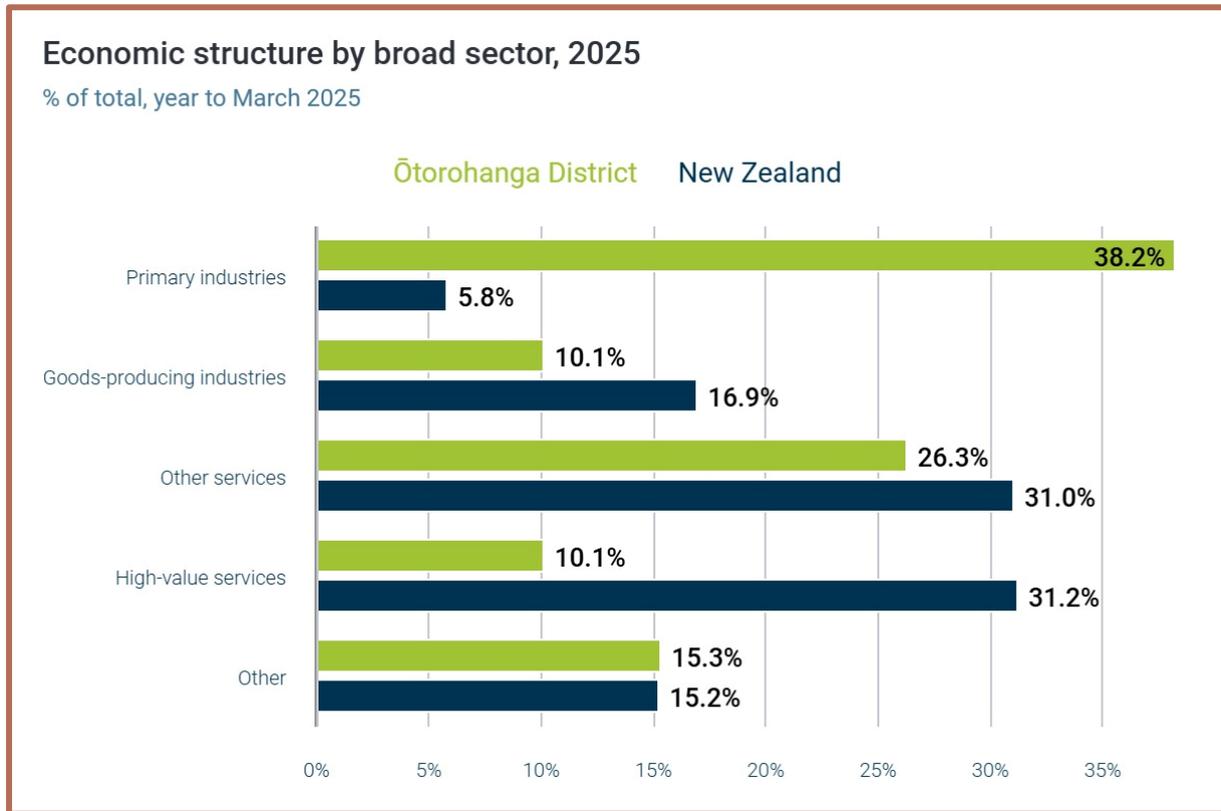
<sup>32</sup> Figures released by Statistics New Zealand in September 2022 indicated that with a projected growth of 5 percent per annum the Māori economy is expected to reach \$100 billion in assets by 2030.





New Zealand's export industry is exposed to geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and shifting demand from key partners like China (refer page 8).

Figure 9:



Source: Infometrics

In June 2024, ŌDC adopted an Economic Wellbeing Strategy. Prompted by the change, uncertainty and innovation apparent at the time, the Strategy sought to understand what Council, with its partners needed to do to face the numerous economic, social, and environmental challenges and maximise opportunities. With the shift in the purpose of local government away from a broad based wellbeing approach to focus on infrastructure and public services to support local economic growth and development<sup>lxxxvi</sup>, the Strategy remains relevant for Council to inform the 2027/37 LTP.

## INCOME<sup>33</sup>

In the year to March 2025, mean annual earnings in Ōtorohanga District was \$69,818 per annum (cf. New Zealand \$81,958). – an increase over 2022 of 14.2% (cf. New Zealand 17.2%)<sup>lxxxvii</sup>. As highlighted in the previous ES, the district continues to lag behind the growth in mean earnings nationally. In recent years, a concern of all New Zealanders, has been the rate of inflation with costs rising faster than wages and salaries. Although wages have risen and inflation is more in check since its peak in 2022 (refer Appendix 2), working people continue to report that income has not kept up with the cost of living over the last 12 months<sup>lxxxviii</sup>.

Another indicator of stress is the extent to which households are behind in loan repayments. In their August 2025 Credit Indicator Report, Centrix Credit Bureau noted that<sup>lxxxix</sup>:

- Consumers in arrears were on the rise - 12.41% of the credit active population as at July 2025, 1.3% higher than July 2024

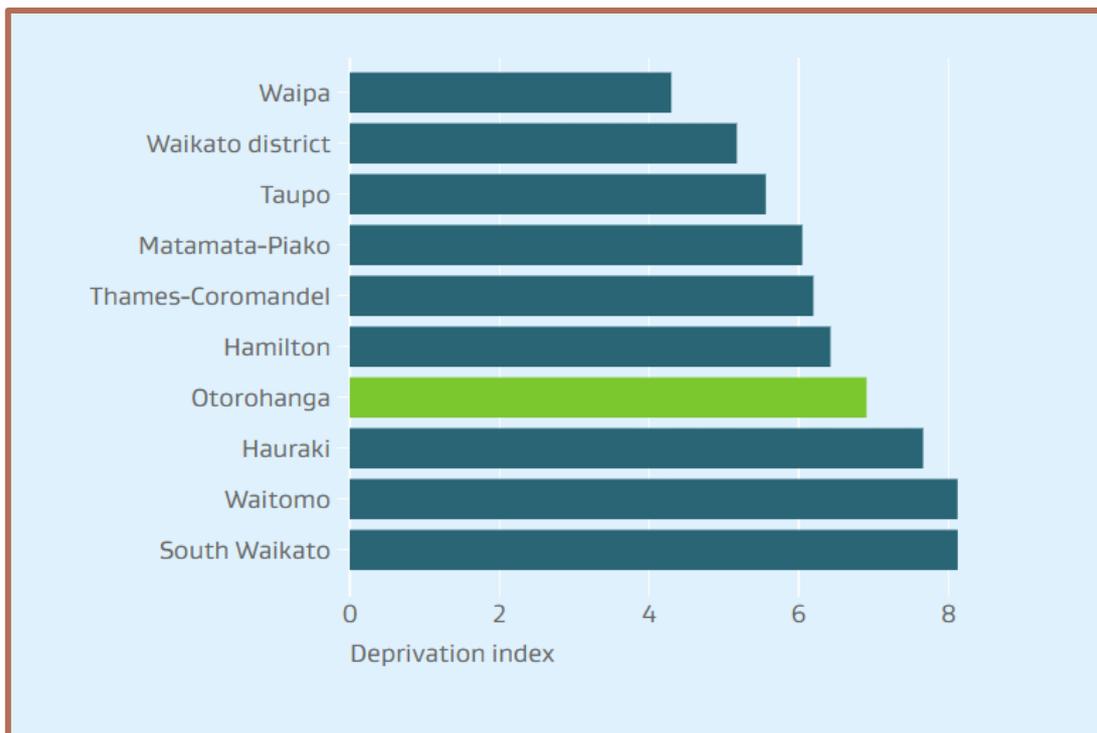
<sup>33</sup> As noted on page 2, this ES needs to be read in conjunction with the affordability study prepared for ŌDC by Infometrics.



- Mortgage arrears had improved and that the areas with the lowest arrears were Mackenzie District, Queenstown-Lakes, Wellington City, Ōtorohanga District and Selwyn District. Areas with the highest arrears were the districts of Kawerau, South Taranaki, South Waikato, Hauraki and Far North.

Although mortgage arrears in the district are low in comparison to the rest of the country, Ōtorohanga rated 6.9<sup>34</sup> on the University of Otago’s socioeconomic deprivation index for 2023 – an increase of 0.1 since 2018 and 1.24 above the national mean for 2023<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, of the ten councils that make up the Waikato Region, the district was the fourth highest on the deprivation index (refer Figure10).

**Figure 10: Socioeconomic Deprivation Waikato Region 2023**



Source: University of Otago

Affordability is an issue for some residents and Council will need to be mindful of the effects of the rise in the cost of living on household budgets when determining its programmes for the 2027/37 LTP.

## HOUSING

Housing availability, affordability, and quality continues to be a concern for the district. In July 2022, a community-led housing group was established and two years later Council endorsed the ‘Homes for our Community: The Ōtorohanga District Housing Plan’ which assigns various actions to Council and other agencies to help address the housing challenges identified<sup>xci</sup>. This work is ongoing and aligned with the Waikato Housing Initiative.

### AVAILABILITY

In its most recent stocktake (2024), the Waikato Housing Initiative has estimated<sup>35</sup> that overall Ōtorohanga District required a further 143 houses in 2023 to meet local demand. Furthermore, an additional 963 homes (48 per year) were projected to be needed by 2043<sup>xcii</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Scores range from 1 to 8 with 8 being the most deprived. Dimensions of socioeconomic deprivation measured in the index include access to the internet, income, employment, qualifications, housing and household composition.

<sup>35</sup> The estimate is based on the 2018 Census using SNZ Projected High Scenario data as 2023 Census data was not available when the stocktake was undertaken. For this reason, the shortfall may be an overestimation as the Medium to Low Scenario better reflect population changes for Ōtorohanga District in recent years.





Like other regions, the demand for residential construction in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty fell significantly in late 2022, with declines in building consents for dwelling units consistent through to 2024 (refer Figure 11)<sup>xciii</sup>. High interest rates, escalating construction costs, economic uncertainty and rises in the cost of living and falling house prices all contributed to the decline. The slowing in construction is reflected in building consents issued for new dwellings for the district. Thirty-nine building consents were lodged in 2022 for new houses compared with 61 in the previous year, a decrease of 36.1% (refer Figure 11 below)<sup>xciv</sup>. The decrease for the district continued through 2023 and 2024 before rising again in 2025. Overall, the building consents for new dwellings is forecast to continue trending upward for the Waikato/Bay of Plenty regions for the six years from 2025 through to 2030 (refer Appendix 3)<sup>xcv</sup>.

**Figure 11: No. New Dwellings Consented Ōtorohanga District 2020-2025**



Source: Stats NZ

### AFFORDABILITY

According to the 2023 Census, 65.2% of households<sup>xcvi</sup> in Ōtorohanga District owned or partly owned their own homes, compared to 66% for New Zealand<sup>36</sup>. As a proportion of income, home ownership may be more achievable for some lower income households in the district than for households in other parts of the country. Infometrics note that in 2025, 23.8% of the average household income in Ōtorohanga District would be required to service a 20-year mortgage on the average house value, with a 20% deposit at average 2-year fixed interest rates – well below the proportion of income required for New Zealand households on the same terms (38.9%)<sup>xcvii</sup>.

An uncomfortable trend for Ōtorohanga is the cost of rental housing relative to income which has increased in recent years. Today the proportion of income residents spend on housing is closer to that for New Zealand households. This trend is illustrated in Figure 12 below which shows the changes in the rental affordability index for Ōtorohanga District and New Zealand between 2000 and 2025<sup>xcviii</sup>.

### QUALITY

The 2023 Census indicates that a quarter of the Ōtorohanga District population live in mouldy and damp dwellings (16.4% and 21.4% respectively)<sup>xcix</sup>. This appears to be an improvement on the 2018 Census which reported that 21.4% were living in mouldy dwellings and 29.2% lived in homes that were damp<sup>c</sup>. The decrease may be due in part to the work of Maru Energy Trust – a not-for-profit charitable trust established in 2018 to help with making homes warmer, drier and healthier. ŌDC is a supporter of the Trust and provides assistance via an annual grant.

<sup>36</sup> Stats NZ signal some caution with this data due to the response rates to the 2023 Census and changes to questionnaire design with respect to this question.



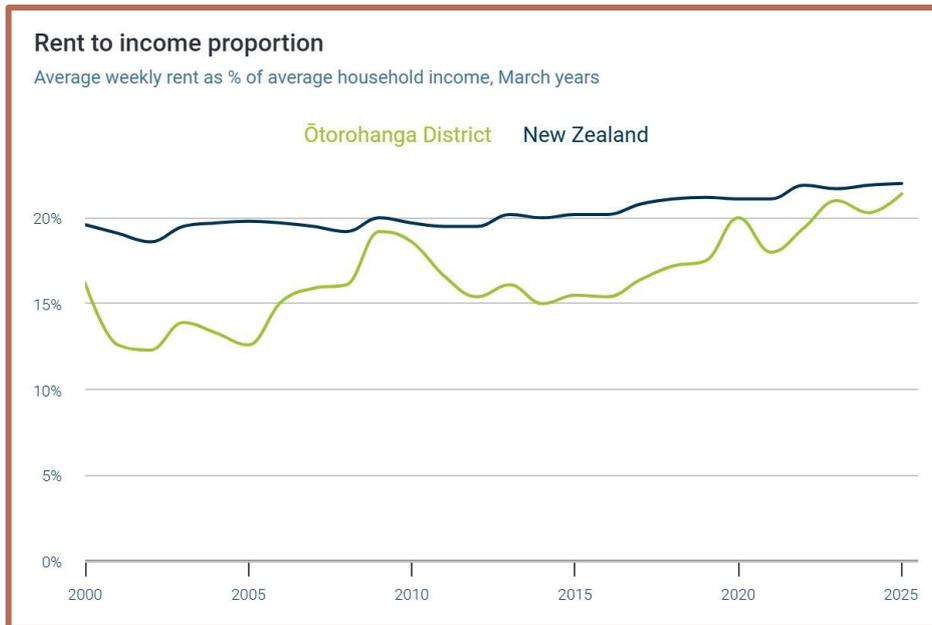


## ELDER PERSON HOUSING

Council owns and administers 28 housing units for older persons - 22 in Ōtorohanga and six in Kāwhia. A survey of all tenants has been carried out annually since 2022 alongside ŌDC’s residents survey. Those that responded to the 2025 survey<sup>37</sup> expressed a high level of satisfaction with the overall condition of their unit (70.6.% very satisfied; 5.9 % satisfied while 23.5% were neutral)<sup>ci</sup>.

A review of housing for the elderly was undertaken in late 2025 with the report yet to be presented to Council.

Figure 12:



Source: Infometrics

## PLACE

### ENVIRONMENT<sup>38</sup>

Environment and wellbeing are intimately connected. In 2022, 80% of respondents to the Waikato Regional Council’s *Your Environment – What Matters* survey were generally satisfied with their local environment (cf. 2019, 72%)<sup>cii</sup>. However, 42% felt that the state of their local environment had declined over the past few years (cf. 2019, 47%)<sup>ciii</sup>. Although general satisfaction of their local environment was high, respondents concern about various aspects of the environment was also high with nearly all measures registering concern over 70%. Table 6 ranks these environmental issues from highest concern to lowest based on the views of Ōtorohanga respondents and compares these responses to the results for the Waikato as a whole. Generally, results were similar except for loss of quality food producing soil and pest species damaging and reducing New Zealand native plants where the level of concern was higher for district respondents than for the region<sup>civ</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Sixty one percent (61%) of current tenants responded to the 2025 survey. Over the four years that the survey has been conducted, 2025 had the highest number of participants to date (17 out of a possible 28) with a margin of error of 15%.

<sup>38</sup> See also comments under Placemaking (Climate Change) below.





**Table 6: Environmental Concerns – Ōtorohanga District (Ranked)/Waikato Region 2022**

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	RESIDENTS CONCERNED %	
	ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT	WAIKATO REGION
Water pollution from towns and cities	92	86
Pest species damaging and reducing native birds	89	83
Loss of quality food producing soils	89	79
Pest species damaging and reducing New Zealand native plants	88	80
Water pollution from industry	86	85
Spread of cities and towns across farmland	82	71
Pest species damaging and reducing New Zealand native fish	81	77
Loss of bush and wetlands	75	80
Effects of climate change	72	75
Health of soils	69	68
Effects of sea level rise	68	66
Water pollution from rural land	67	74
Air pollution	65	71
Loss of the region's coastlines natural character	64	69

Source: Waikato Regional Council, Adapted from *Your Environment – What matters?*

Although the sample size is small<sup>39</sup>, the data indicates that Ōtorohanga residents value their district environment.

## PLACEMAKING

*The characteristics of a place—its geography, infrastructure, cultural identity, natural assets, and built environment—directly influence the types of industries that can thrive, the attractiveness of the area to investors and talent, and the quality of life for residents. Local government plays a critical role in enhancing place-based attributes through strategic planning, investment in public spaces, community events, transport connectivity, and support for local businesses<sup>cv</sup>.*

C Lee & P McVeigh, Guest Authors, Taituarā Media Centre, July 2025

Over the past two LTPs, Council has made a concerted effort to move beyond being simply a provider of services and has embraced its placemaking role. This has involved, with the help of the community, the development of concept plans to better understand what is wanted in different parts of the district and provide blueprints for future growth and investment. Adopted in October 2022, the first concept plan was for Ōtorohanga Township. This was followed by plans for Kāwhia, Aotea and Ōpārau, and the rural communities, adopted in mid-2024.

The concept plans essentially look out 30 years and contain a broad mix of actions - some of which may be funded by Council (via rates) and some may be funded or delivered by other organisations. As aspirational documents, Council has had to adopt a prioritised programme of projects for the actions it funds<sup>40</sup>. This programme was confirmed in August 2024 and gave preference to ‘shovel ready’ projects that delivered something tangible ‘rather than producing more plans and strategies. Figure 13 below summarises progress on the initial 42 priority projects in the current programme, as recorded in July 2025<sup>vi</sup>. Most projects are progressing (55%) and a small number have been completed (14%). However, almost one fifth of projects were delayed waiting on other projects to be progressed or awaiting the outcome of the government’s RMA and other legislative reforms<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> The final sample size for this survey was n=1,026 (Ōtorohanga n=81), yielding a maximum margin of error of +/-3.06% at the 95% confidence interval (*Your Environment – What matters?* 2022, page 9)

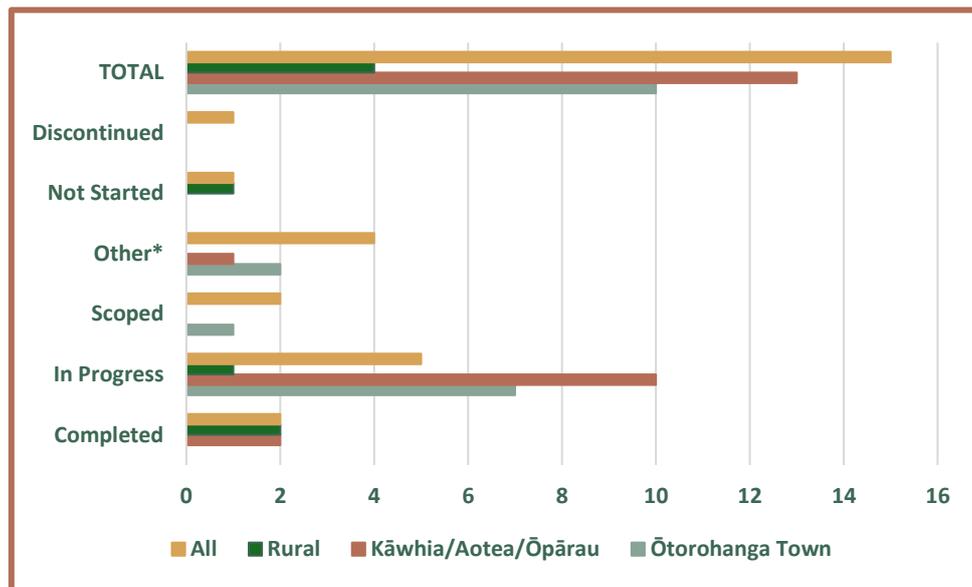
<sup>40</sup> Implementation plan(s) reviewed and updated three yearly.

<sup>41</sup> At the time of writing the ES, Concept Plan actions not included in existing work programmes were on hold due to availability of staff resources.





Figure 13: Progress with Concept Plan Priority Projects - July 2025



\* Delayed/Reassessing/Waiting on Other Projects

Source: Ōtorohanga District Council, July 2025

While aspects of placemaking will continue to be the ‘bread and butter’ of local government, commentators are concerned that the government’s proposed system changes for councils with its narrow growth focus within a fiscally constrained environment may risk devaluing the role local government plays in shaping cohesive, connected, and resilient communities<sup>cvi</sup>.

C Lee & P McVeigh

In the lead up to the 2027/37 LTP, Council will need to review the concept plans and determine funding priorities in light of the legislative changes being progressed by government and in conversation with the community and its partners.

## PUBLIC SPACES

ŌDC manages 26 parks and reserves in the district totalling 45 hectares<sup>42</sup>. Together these areas provide for the district’s active and passive recreation needs while making a significant contribution to the vibrancy and liveability of local communities. Included in the mix are five playgrounds catering for people of all ages and abilities<sup>43</sup>. There are also several reserves located in rural areas.

Results from the 2025 Annual Residents Survey<sup>cvi</sup> show that most respondents thought that, for its size, the district had a good variety of parks and reserves (68.6%). Although some thought the variety was ‘okay’ (22.3%) or that it could be better (9.1%), respondents suggested that improvements could be achieved by adding more features to existing parks rather than establishing new ones. Suggested improvements included adding:

- Fitness trails
- Cultural storytelling and play features celebrating District identity
- Fenced dog areas.

As well as variety, survey participants were also asked about the quality of the parks and reserves. Almost 60% of respondents thought that the quality was good. A further 28% thought the quality was ‘okay’ while 12.7% thought it could be better. Proposed quality improvements included:

- Consistent upkeep to maintain cleanliness and safety

<sup>42</sup> These are reserves specifically maintained for active and passive recreation purposes. In total Council owns 178.839 hectares of reserves including flood protection and road reserves.

<sup>43</sup> For a list of parks and reserves refer to: [www.otodc.govt.nz/our-district/parks-and-reserves](http://www.otodc.govt.nz/our-district/parks-and-reserves)



- Better accessibility (e.g. disability-friendly paths)
- More native plantings and better environmental care (e.g. water quality improvements).

In addition to open space, other district facilities include:

- Ōtorohanga Memorial Pool Complex
- Community halls (x8)<sup>44</sup>
- Public toilets (x8)
- Libraries (x2)
- A 3.2km walkway on the Ōtorohanga stopbanks - *Te Ara a Wawaiā i O-rāhiri*

Library users in 2025 were very happy (71.4%) or happy (24.5%) with the service they received from staff<sup>45</sup>. Suggested improvements to library infrastructure included better internal and online navigation to help locate specific books, more comfortable seating options and better parking and access.

## INFRASTRUCTURE<sup>46</sup>

### LAND TRANSPORT

The road network is the backbone of Ōtorohanga's infrastructure. Council is responsible for 805 kilometres of roads, of which 529 kilometres (66%) are sealed. State Highways 3 and 31/39 also run through the district. Other infrastructure includes approximately 134 bridges, 83 stock underpasses, 5,918 culverts, 26.9 kilometres of footpaths and cycleways, and nearly 3,290 signs. This activity accounts for more than 80% of the total value of Council's assets.<sup>cx</sup>

Community resilience is profoundly affected by any disruption to the roading network and other infrastructure. As demonstrated by recent weather events, communities can very quickly become isolated with no means of access, loss of power, communication and access to potable water.

As noted on page 15, post the adoption of our 2024/34 LTP, NZTA advised that funding allocations for 2024/25 to 2026/27 would be below what was needed to deliver on our planned programme of works. To accommodate the shortfall ŌDC has had to adjust its land transport programme to match the new national priorities. Council also decided to continue to collect rates for the local share not matched by NZTA funding and use this money to fund priority projects ensuring that some momentum was maintained in areas that had been substantially cut (e.g. road safety, culvert renewals).

Although Council may have an indication of likely funding allocations prior to adopting its 2027/37 LTP, NZTA is again not expected to release its revised National Land Transport Programme until August 2027. At this stage, a change in national direction is not anticipated which means when preparing its roading budgets, ŌDC may need to consider how or if it provides for activities unlikely to attract match funding from NZTA.

### STORMWATER

The district's stormwater networks are comprised as follows<sup>cxii</sup>:

- Ōtorohanga - 22.7kms of pipes and 4.5kms of open drains which works in tandem with the Ōtorohanga Flood Protection Scheme's stopbanks and pump stations to protect property and prevent erosion.
- Kāwhia - 3.8km of pipes, 0.5km of open drains and one small pump station located in a low-lying area.
- Aotea - soakage devices and overland flow soaking through the sand base. Roof water is captured by residents for drinking water.

<sup>44</sup> Two administered via Council (Kāwhia Community Centre and the Girl Guides Hall in Ōtorohanga) and six administered by hall committees (Arohena, Honikiwi, Kio Kio, Otewa, Ngutunui, Tokanui Crossroads).

<sup>45</sup> Annual Library Survey 2025 which has a margin of error of 7%.

<sup>46</sup> Delivery of water supply and wastewater services by WWL from July 2027 are covered on page X and not repeated in this section. However, it is acknowledged that ŌDC will continue to have an ongoing role in rural water supplies.



As discussed in Section One, ŌDC has decided to continue to deliver stormwater services ‘in-house’. Effectively this means that, under the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, ŌDC will be required to ring fence the cost of these services, produce a water services strategy<sup>47</sup> and a stormwater network risk management plan as well as managing the activity previously undertaken by Council’s water staff. Although no longer a component of the LTP process, provision will need to be made for resourcing the new requirements associated with this activity.

## FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND COASTAL STRUCTURES

Commissioned in 1966, the Ōtorohanga Flood Protection Scheme (ŌFPS) is part of Project Watershed – a flood protection, soil conservation and river management scheme for the greater Waikato catchment. ŌFPS assets include 4.6 kilometres of stopbanks<sup>cxii</sup> to keep the Waipā River from flooding Ōtorohanga township and three large flood pumps stations to pump surface water back to the river in a flood event. The scheme design is for a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)<sup>48</sup>. Post the 13 February 2026 severe weather event, a condition assessment will be required of affected stopbanks.

ŌDC owns the stopbanks and all the assets that make up the ŌFPS. Maintenance and operation of the scheme is carried out by ŌDC staff under a service level agreement with Waikato Regional Council. The arrangement means Council can coordinate this activity with local stormwater drainage activities. All ŌFPS work is paid for with funding from Project Watershed<sup>49</sup>.

Should the Coalition Government’s proposals for simplifying local government be implemented as planned, new arrangements will be required with respect to the oversight and funding of Project Watershed.

ŌDC is responsible for various coastal defences (e.g. sea walls at Kāwhia and Aotea) protecting public and private property from coastal erosion and provides water access facilities (e.g. the Kāwhia wharf and boat ramps). In some instances, these assets are multi-functional, providing for protection and as well as for recreation needs.

In its recently released Climate Change Response Plan (CCRP), ŌDC notes that it is seeking the renewal of the resource consents from Waikato Regional Council for both the Aotea<sup>50</sup> and Kāwhia<sup>51</sup> sea walls. The process managed by the Regional Council “... will likely have regard to ecological and environmental considerations for the coastal environment in which they are located”.<sup>cxiii</sup> In line with the National Adaptation Framework (October 2025) and the expectation that local government will be required to prepare adaptation plans in high priority risk areas, CCRP also commits to “... work with coastal communities to establish appropriate climate change adaptation plans”<sup>cxiv</sup>. Provision any work associated with the resource consents and the adaptation plans will need to be budgeted in the 2027/37 LTP.

## WASTE MINIMISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Adopted in 2024, ŌDC’s Waste Minimisation and Management Plan has a vision for “... a sustainable, low waste Ōtorohanga District ...”<sup>cxv</sup>. In 2024/25, ŌDC contractors collected 331m<sup>3</sup> of refuse and 6,595<sup>3</sup> tonnes of recycling<sup>cxvi</sup>. Although the volume of recycling achieved for this year was less than the 10% increase sought over the previous year (see Figure 14), it is hoped that the series of ŌDC community events to share knowledge from recycling and sustainability experts will help boost volumes in future years.

<sup>47</sup> Prepared every three years, similar to a long term plan but only for stormwater.

<sup>48</sup> A 1% AEP is equivalent to a 1-in-100-year flood level.

<sup>49</sup> Project Watershed rates are collected by Waikato Regional Council.

<sup>50</sup> The Resource Consent for Aotea has been renewed since the CCRP was written and work is underway on the Resource Consent for Kāwhia.

<sup>51</sup> Resource Consent is due to expire in 2029.



Figure 14: Recycling Volumes for Ōtorohanga District 2019 - 2025



Source: 2024/25 Annual Report, Ōtorohanga District Council

Overall, residents in Ōtorohanga (85%) and Kāwhia (77%) are happy or very happy with the kerbside collection service (refuse and recycling) provided by Council’s contractors<sup>cxvii</sup>. However, respondents to the Annual Residents Survey thought that there were “opportunities to modernise the system, make it more convenient, and provide clearer communication”<sup>cxviii</sup>.

With respect to taking new approaches to the vexed question of increased waste going to landfill<sup>52</sup>, ŌDC is part of a recent Waikato/Bay of Plenty initiative for a collaborative approach to waste enabling the transition to a more circular economy. In April 2024, the Central North Island Waste Liaison Group (CNIWLG), which covers Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki and Ruapehu and Gisborne Districts, proposed developing a cross-regional waste strategy. Waikato Regional Council, on behalf of the CNIWLG, subsequently sought and, as of Jan 2026 secured<sup>cxix</sup>, co-funding from central government<sup>53</sup> through the Waste Minimisation Fund (WMF) for development of the strategy and a waste infrastructure plan.<sup>cxix</sup> The funding enables a collaborative effort to co-design a unified approach to waste reduction. ŌDC is one of the partner councils to the project and has committed staff time to support its development.

The cross-regional waste strategy and waste infrastructure plan may open up opportunities to work toward ŌDC’s vision for a sustainable, low waste Ōtorohanga District.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND EMISSIONS

### RECENT EVENTS

At the time of writing the 2023 ES, Cyclone Gabrielle was devastating many parts of the North Island. Ōtorohanga District was fortunate that the effects locally were not more widespread with the Ōpārau community bearing the brunt of the impacts along with disruption to state highway access.

Three years on, Ōtorohanga was the centre of a severe weather event<sup>54</sup> with intense, rapid rainfall causing widespread flooding, slips and inundation. In addition, dams overflowed, crops and infrastructure were

<sup>52</sup> Refer to Appendix 4 for a map showing how waste moves to landfill in the Central North Island

<sup>53</sup> The WMF is providing \$303,274 – 56% of the funds required to support the project – with the remainder of the cost being funded by Waikato and Bay of Plenty Regional Councils.

<sup>54</sup> 13 February 2026.





destroyed, around 80 residents were forced to evacuate their homes and nearly 60 homes were yellow stickered. Tragically, a man also died when his vehicle became submerged in floodwaters.<sup>cxxixcxxxii</sup>

At this stage it is too early to quantify the full effects of the 13 February 2026 event as it will take months before the extent of the damage and the cost of clean-up is fully realised<sup>cxxiii</sup>. However, it is expected that the flow-on effects will be front of mind when preparing the 2027/37 LTP as remediation and resilience improvements will happen over years rather than months.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change hazards and risks for the district have been summarised in recent work<sup>cxxiv</sup> undertaken by Waikato Regional Council (refer Appendix 5). In brief, hazards for the Ōtorohanga District include, but are not limited to<sup>cxxv</sup>:

- Extreme weather, high rainfall and flooding events – e.g. vulnerable communities like Ōtorohanga and Kāwhia are exposed due to the high flooding risk in these areas.
- Higher temperatures and drought – e.g. potential effects on the rural sector including reduced stock productivity, raising agricultural costs and animal welfare impacts
- Land instability – e.g. The high country in Ōtorohanga is highly vulnerable to erosion and land instability, as are the local roads and state highways traversing the district
- Coastal hazards – e.g. Kāwhia and Aotea Harbours may experience increasing sedimentation, marine heatwaves, acidification and sea-level rise.

As the costs of weather-related events mount, a concern to residents and local authorities is the very real potential for the insurance industry to withdraw, or partially withdraw, from selected parts of coastal, river or landslide-prone settlements due to increased climate change risk<sup>cxxvi</sup>. For example, in January 2026 it was revealed that AA Insurance temporarily had stopped offering new home insurance policies in Westport because of the town's flood risk<sup>cxxvii</sup>.

## EMISSIONS

Waikato Regional Council has collated an inventory of community-scale greenhouse gas emissions every three years since 2015/16. The most recent inventory<sup>cxxviii</sup> was undertaken in 2021/22<sup>55</sup> and indicates:

- As a region, the Waikato's per capita net emissions of greenhouse gases were approximately 35% higher than the national average (23.7 vs 15.0 t CO<sub>2</sub>e/cap)<sup>cxxix56</sup>
- Although working hard and experiencing some success in making reductions, agriculture is by far the largest contributor to the region's emissions (67%) offset by the forestry sector which removes about 44% of the Waikato's total gross emissions<sup>cxxx</sup>.

The ten district councils that make up the Waikato Region have a wide range of emissions profiles. Ōtorohanga District makes up 7.9% of the region's land area and 2.1% of the population<sup>57</sup>, however, per capita net emissions for the district in 2021/22 were 97t CO<sub>2</sub>e/cap – second highest in the region after Waitomo<sup>58</sup>. These were mostly from agriculture followed by (in declining order) forestry, transportation, waste, stationary energy<sup>59</sup> and industry. Even before releasing its 2025 CCRP, ŌDC as a responsible corporate citizen was working toward the reducing its emissions footprint and had prioritised as an organisation transitioning to low (carbon) emissions. Ten specific actions have been identified and progressed. Examples include adopting a vehicle policy that prioritises the transition to low-emission vehicles in the Council fleet and encouraging efficient/low-travel options such as car-pooling to events/meetings and virtual meetings, webinars and conferences. It is important that Council continues to play its part in reducing emissions and maintains and build on its achievements to date.

<sup>55</sup> Reported in 2023

<sup>56</sup> See Appendix 6 for breakdown by territorial authority.

<sup>57</sup> As estimated in 2021/22.

<sup>58</sup> See Appendix 6 for full table

<sup>59</sup> Includes boilers, heaters, furnaces, kilns, ovens, flares, thermal oxidizers, dryers, and any other equipment or machinery that combusts carbon bearing fuels or waste stream materials.



Cyclone Gabrielle was a wake-up call for New Zealand and served to give urgency to ŌDC's intentions to develop a CCRP. Adopted in June 2025<sup>60</sup>, the plan provides Council with a pathway for implementing actions to:

- Be more sustainable and reduce the organisation's environmental impacts
- Focus on helping district communities to be stronger and more resilient.

The goals and actions laid out in the CCRP should both guide ŌDC activity managers when preparing programmes and budgets for the 2027/37 LTP as well helping Council identify funding priorities for the next 10 years.

## LAST WORD

Uncertainty prevails as leaders globally grapple with the demise of the familiar world order that has guided international relationships, economics and politics for the past 80 years. The only constant in the ever changing political landscape is that things will not return to the normal to which we have become accustomed. Reform is essential and, although uncomfortable, disruptive change is needed rather than the familiar incremental change.

In the current environment "*Politicians need to learn to be agents of change*"

(Professor Joel Hellman, pers comm).<sup>cxviii</sup>

<sup>60</sup>

Noting that preliminary work was undertaken in March 2024 on a framework outlining the nature and extent of ŌDC's role in responding to climate change. In addition, an action plan was endorsed by ŌDCs Risk and Assurance Committee in June 2024 which focused on reducing ŌDC's greenhouse gas emissions and identifying the need to consider and respond to the climate change risks and impacts as they relate to Council's assets and infrastructure .





## APPENDICES

1. ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION CHANGE BY TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY
2. ANNUAL % CHANGE IN CPI COMPARED TO THE LABOUR COST INDEX
3. DWELLING UNITS IN WAIKATO/BAY OF PLENTY FORECAST 2025 - 2030
4. HOW WASTE MOVES TO LANDFILL IN THE CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND
5. KEY CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS FOR ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT
6. OVERALL EMISSION ESTIMATES FOR WAIKATO REGION AND BREAKDOWN BY TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES (2021/22), TCO<sub>2</sub>E

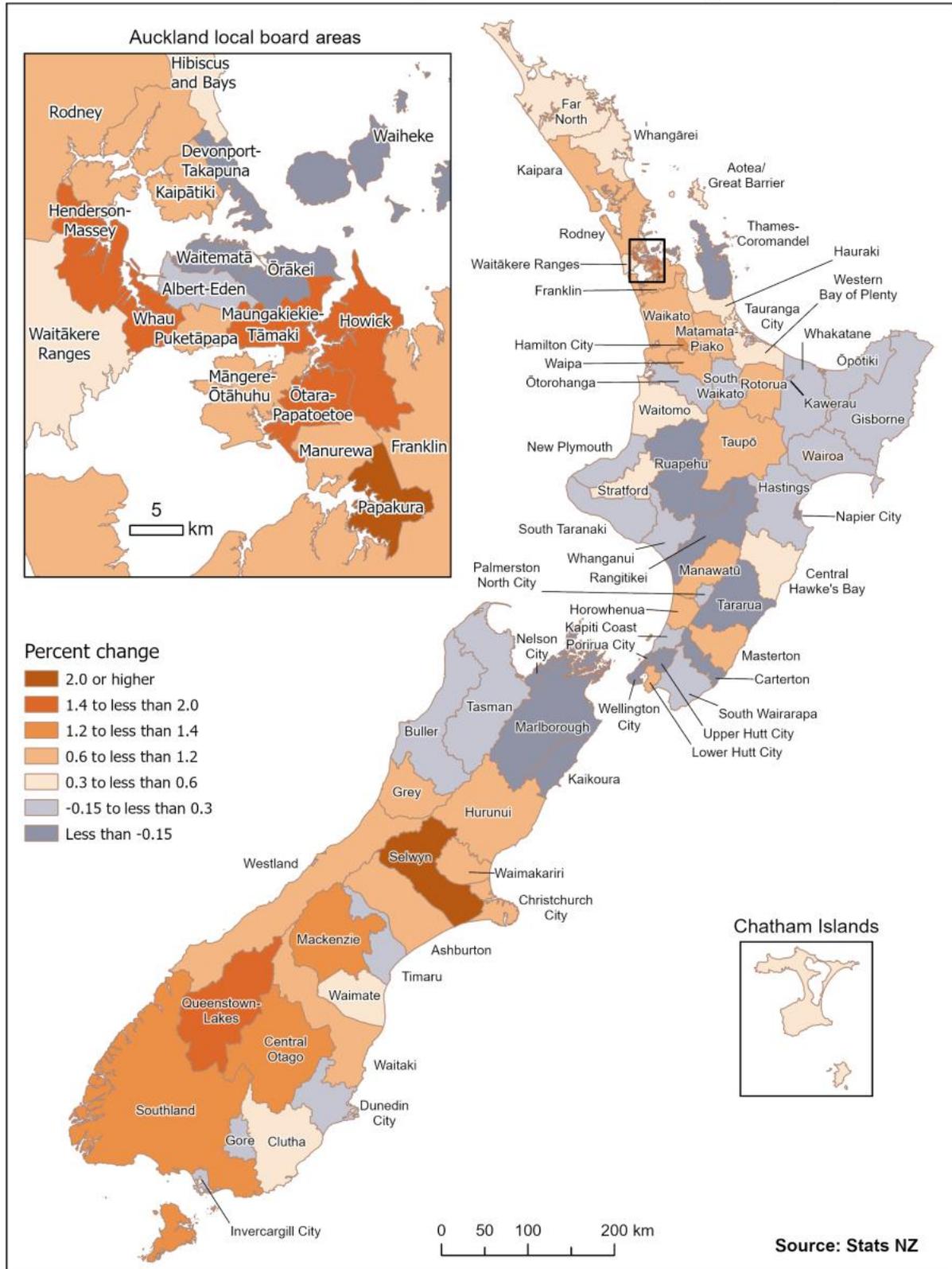
## ENDNOTES



# APPENDIX 1<sup>cxixii</sup>

Figure 15:

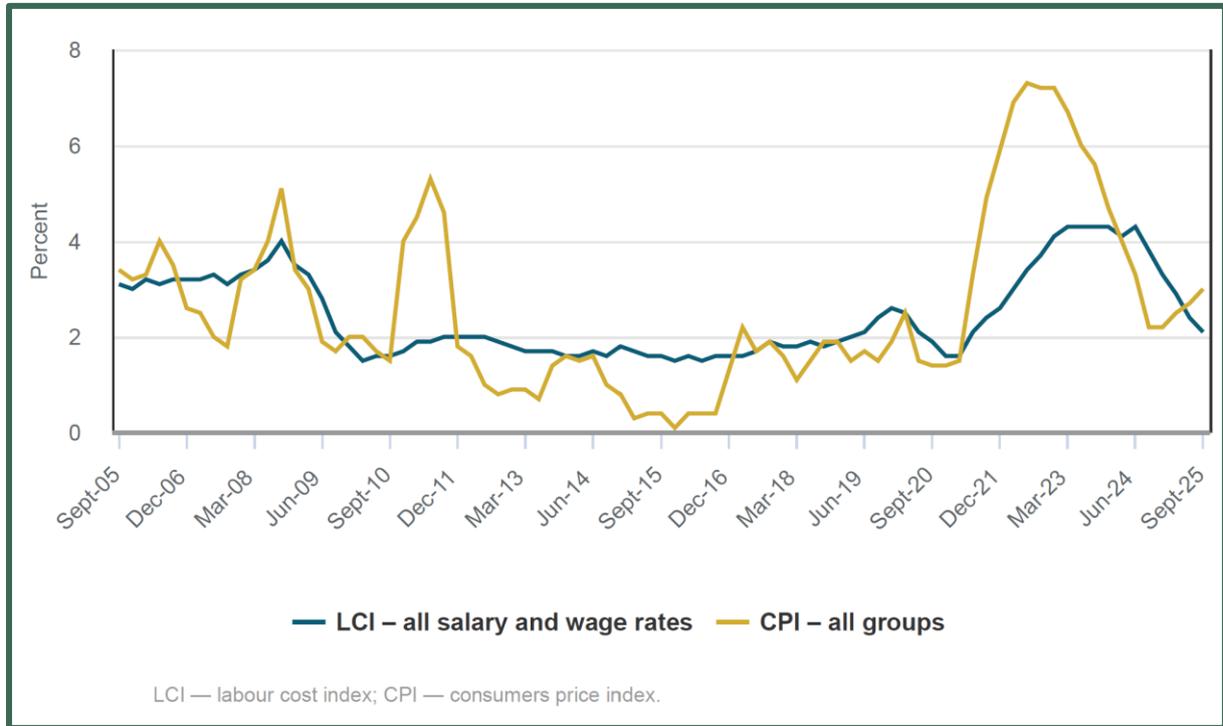
Estimated resident population change, by territorial authority and Auckland local board area, year ended 30 June 2025 (provisional)





## APPENDIX 2:

Figure 16: Annual % Change in CPI Compared to the Labour Cost Index



Source: Stats NZ

## APPENDIX 3:

Figure 17: Dwelling Units in Waikato/Bay of Plenty Forecast 2025 - 2030



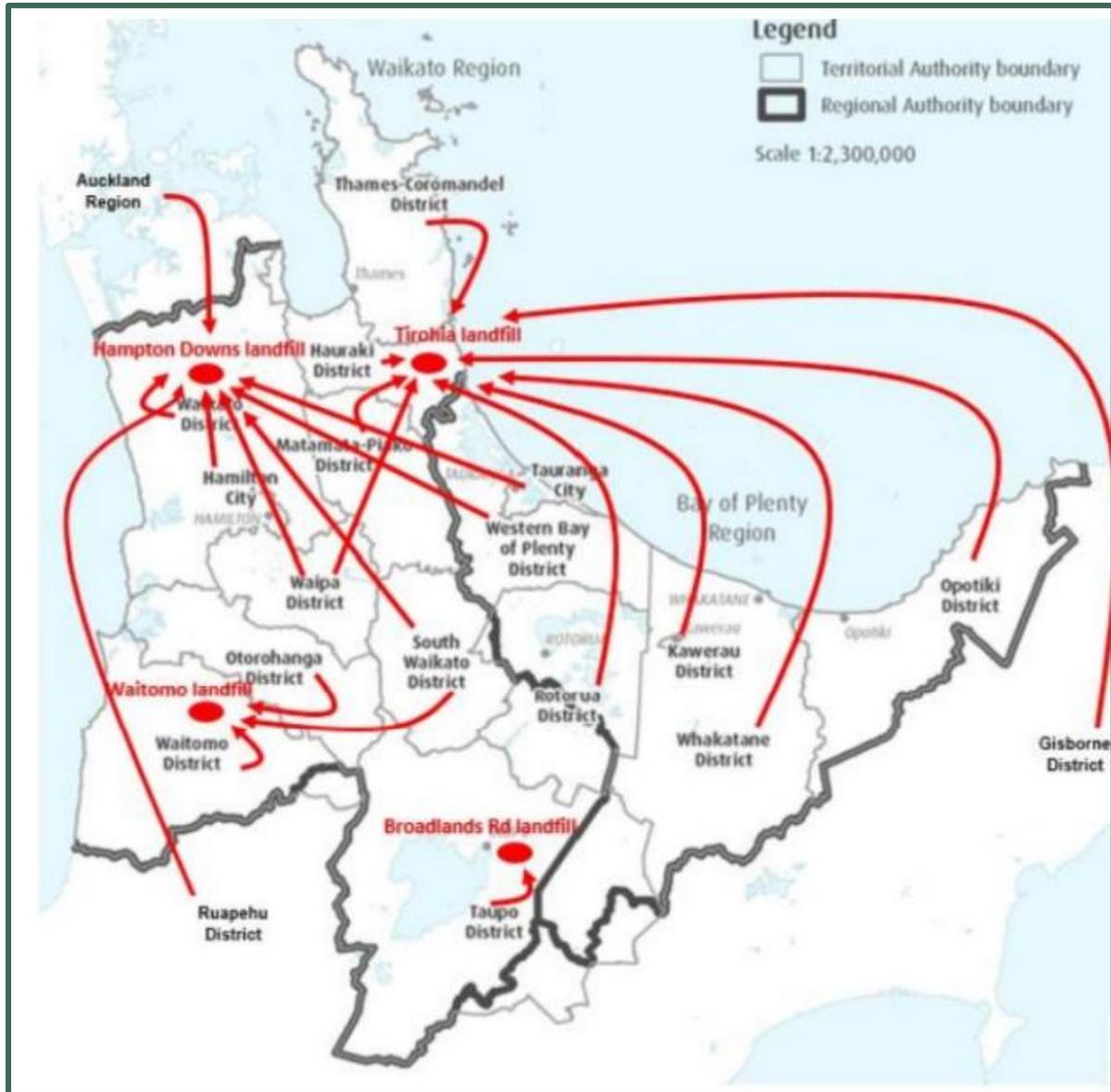
Source: BRANZ  
National Construction Pipeline Report 2025





## APPENDIX 4:

Figure 18: How Waste Moves to Landfill in the Central North Island



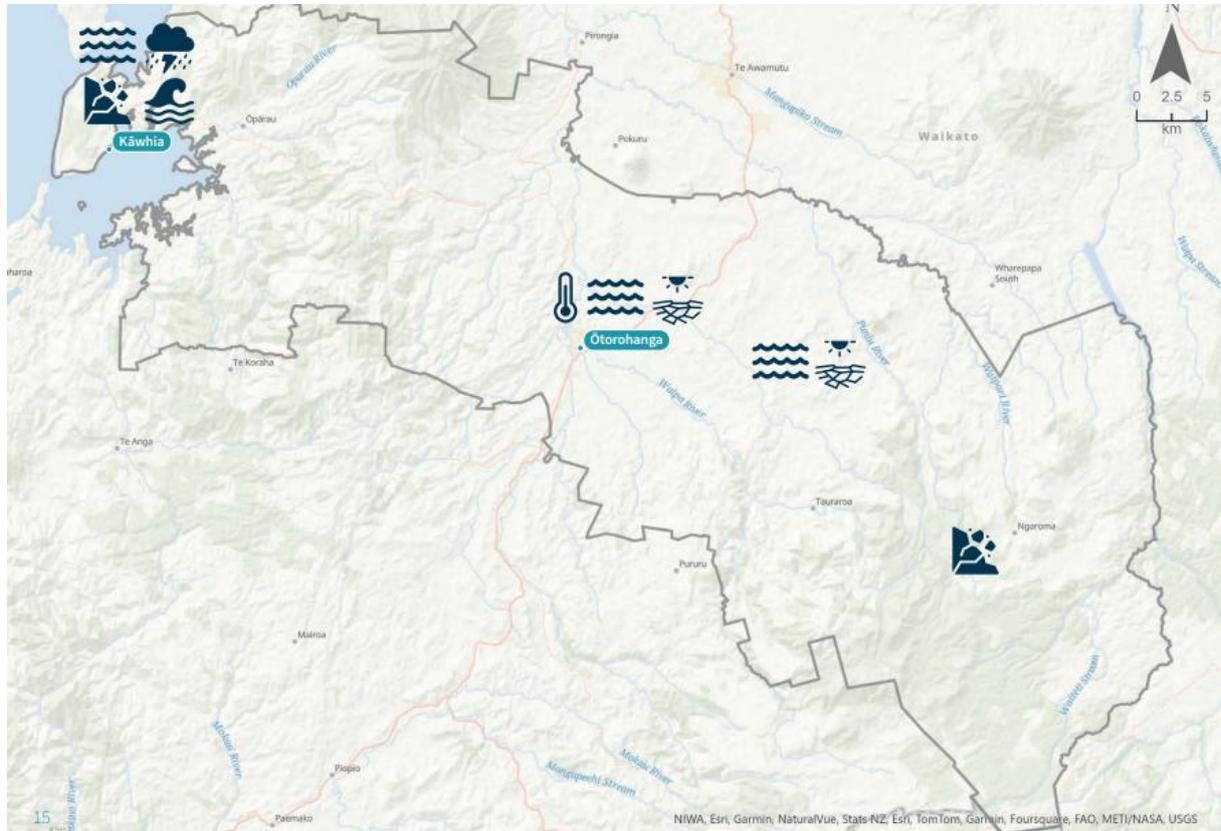
Source: Bay of Plenty Regional Council





# APPENDIX 5:

Figure 19: Key Climate Change Risks for Ōtorohanga District



**Hazards**

- Extreme weather
- Rainfall and flooding
- Higher temperature
- Drought
- Land instability
- Coastal hazards

Source: Waikato Regional Council 2025





## APPENDIX 6:

**Figure 20: Overall emission estimates for Waikato Region and breakdown by territorial authorities (2021/22), tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Waikato Region 2021/22	Hamilton City 2021/22	Hauraki 2021/22	Matamata-Piako 2021/22	Otorohanga 2021/22	South Waikato 2021/22	Taupō 2021/22	Thames-Coromandel 2021/22	Waikato District 2021/22	Waitomo 2021/22	Waipā 2021/22
Stationary energy	1,514,506	280,747	34,371	142,784	16,428	349,186	74,956	44,570	392,019	41,332	138,114
Transportation	1,903,581	675,802	80,577	138,106	40,601	96,240	160,957	122,108	328,152	36,336	224,703
Waste	326,619	49,089	17,581	29,394	22,108	37,406	84,142	26,649	24,011	19,790	16,450
Industry	140,356	49,647	6,112	10,220	2,994	7,122	11,395	9,266	24,284	2,680	16,636
Agriculture	8,138,656	71,295*	617,324	1,347,153	783,964	705,615	1,037,853	204,493	1,550,479	843,484	976,999
Forestry	-1,749,712	512*	149,516	45,005	186,467	-740,165	-1,960,210	-350,978	393,600	983,671	-457,130
Total net (incl. forestry)	10,274,006	1,127,092	905,481	1,712,662	1,052,562	455,404	-590,907	56,108	2,712,545	1,927,293	915,772
Total gross (excl. forestry)	12,023,719	1,126,579	755,965	1,667,657	866,094	1,195,569	1,369,303	407,086	2,318,945	943,621	1,372,902
Population (2021-22 average)	507,465	179,500	22,100	36,950	10,825	25,750	41,200	33,500	87,800	9,690	60,150
Per capita net emission (incl. Forestry)	20	6	41	47	97	18	-14	2	31	199	15
Per capita gross emission (excl. Forestry)	24	6	34	45	80	46	33	12	26	97	23

\* Note: Hamilton City agriculture and forestry results carry some uncertainty due to downscaled inventory data and differences between urban and rural settlements. It is recommended that these numbers be viewed as indicative and further work on this may be undertaken in the future.

Source: Waikato Regional Council 2023<sup>cxviii</sup>

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**Item 33** Finance Report to 28 February 2026

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Brendan O’Callaghan, Manager Finance

**Type** **INFORMATION REPORT**

**Date** 31 March 2026



**1. Purpose | Te kaupapa**

1.1. To provide a progress update against the 2025/26 financial budget.

**2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua**

- 2.1. The Financial Report for the period ended 28 February 2026 shows the operating surplus being up on budget by \$410k, showing a healthy financial position.
- 2.2. Capital expenditure and loan repayments are under budget due to timing of some projects against budget projection.
- 2.3. The balance sheet shows a healthy working capital position; however short-term borrowings may be required to cover payments for the October storm damage and subsequent February weather event.

**3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi**

That Ōtorohanga District Council **RECEIVE** the report titled ‘Finance Report to 28 February 2026’ by Brendan O’Callaghan, Manager Finance.

## 4. Discussion | He kōrerorero

Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expenses  
For the Period Ending February 2026

	Actual	Budget	Variance	Full Year Budget
<b>Revenue</b>				
Rates income	16,784,142	16,595,626	-188,516	16,781,626
Contributions	2,640	6,800	4,160	265,450
Water by Volume Rates	1,062,322	1,173,242	110,920	2,378,879
Subsidies and Grants	5,273,384	4,521,493	-751,891	6,784,167
Other Income	920,633	1,296,260	375,627	1,936,173
Other gains/(losses)	29,180	0	-29,180	0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>24,072,301</b>	<b>23,593,421</b>	<b>-478,880</b>	<b>28,146,295</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Employee Benefit Expenses	4,472,737	4,953,640	480,903	7,576,219
Depreciation and Amortisation	5,606,585	5,226,705	-379,880	7,827,356
Other Expenses	10,311,884	10,035,125	-276,759	14,727,911
Finance Costs	125,704	232,480	106,776	281,231
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>20,516,910</b>	<b>20,447,950</b>	<b>-68,960</b>	<b>30,412,717</b>
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>3,555,391</b>	<b>3,145,471</b>	<b>-409,920</b>	<b>-2,266,422</b>

4.1. Overall, there is a net surplus to the end of February of \$3,555,391, compared to a budgeted surplus of \$3,145,471. The variance in the surplus against budget is due to:

- a) Operating Revenue is up on budget by \$479k. This is due to being \$188k up on budget in rates income and up on budget for subsidies and grants by \$752k. This is offset by being down on budget in other income by \$375k and water by volume rates by \$111k.
- b) Subsidies and grants are up on budget by \$752k due to the timing of roading maintenance work against the budget estimated timing, as well as the increased subsidy rate for the repairs from the October weather event.
- c) Other income is down on budget due to the timing of charging of regulatory fees, as well as interest income.
- d) Operating expenses is up on budget by \$69k, with other expenses being \$277k over budget, depreciation and amortisation \$380k over budget, employee benefit expenses being \$481k under budget and finance costs being \$107k under budget.
- e) Finance costs are under budget due to the reversal of the year end accrual.
- f) Other expenses are over budget due to increased road maintenance spending against budget, as a result of the weather events in July and October. This is also what has driven the increase in subsidy income.

Other Expenses

	Actual	Budget	Variance	Full Year Budget
Activity operation	1,366,213	1,413,397	47,184	2,113,070
Asset Maintenance	657,466	477,850	(179,616)	716,921
Deloitte Fees	775	0	(775)	214,410
Grants and Subsidies	230,149	444,636	214,487	560,307
Insurance	212,366	213,512	1,146	215,387
Minimum Lease Payments Under Operating Leases	16,340	16,944	604	25,423
Other expenses	3,272,373	4,077,896	805,523	5,736,242
Regional Initiatives	15,168	125,920	110,752	188,885
Road maintenance	4,399,811	2,958,940	(1,440,871)	4,649,190
Youth Initiatives	141,223	306,030	164,807	308,076
	10,311,884	10,035,125	(276,759)	14,727,911

Statement of Financial Position  
For the period ending February 2026

	Actual	Full Year Budget	YTD Last Year
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,387,423	1,156,718	910,611
Trade and Other Receivables	5,219,202	2,121,272	3,969,020
Inventory	63,077	31,570	56,861
Loan Receivable	0	250,000	0
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>9,669,701</b>	<b>3,559,560</b>	<b>4,936,492</b>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>			
Investments	9,020,210	7,883,662	7,774,788
Property, Plant and Equipment	434,250,573	443,784,162	411,658,256
Intangible Assets	160,088	67,934	125,184
Loan Receivable	1,501,191	1,500,000	1,467,937
<b>Total Non-current Assets</b>	<b>444,932,061</b>	<b>453,235,758</b>	<b>421,026,165</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>454,601,762</b>	<b>456,795,318</b>	<b>425,962,658</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	2,346,129	2,762,320	-1,415,939
Provisions	1,164	829	1,088
Employee Benefit Liabilities	313,159	409,890	327,426
Income in Advance	114,792	757,035	408,908
Development and Financial Contributions in Advance	587,683	540,624	567,600
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>3,362,927</b>	<b>4,470,698</b>	<b>-110,916</b>
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>			
Provisions	10,779	15,886	11,943
Employee Benefit Liabilities	47,531	47,295	34,008
Borrowings	15,447,613	12,947,613	12,447,613
<b>Total Non-current Liabilities</b>	<b>15,505,922</b>	<b>13,010,794</b>	<b>12,493,563</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>18,868,849</b>	<b>17,481,492</b>	<b>12,382,647</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>435,732,913</b>	<b>439,313,826</b>	<b>413,580,011</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained Earnings	170,135,573	165,319,655	173,423,571
Reserve Funds	3,184,963	3,001,486	3,103,513
Revaluation Reserves	262,412,377	270,992,685	237,052,927
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>435,732,913</b>	<b>439,313,826</b>	<b>413,580,011</b>

4.2. Overall, the balance sheet shows working capital of \$6,306,774 at the end of January, with current assets of \$9,669,701 against current liabilities of \$3,362,927.

4.3. The increase in non-current assets over the prior year reflects the revaluation of ŌDC investments as at 30 June 2025, as well as the impact of the roading revaluation, which was effective at 30 June 2025.

**Combined Cost of Service Statement  
For the Period Ending February 2026**

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Variance	Full Year Budget
<b>Operating Revenue</b>				
Activity Revenue	6,194,017	5,817,753	-376,264	8,720,814
Targeted Rates	8,170,277	8,282,079	111,802	9,487,716
Development Contributions	2,640	6,800	4,160	265,450
General Rates	9,479,632	9,486,789	7,157	9,672,789
Other General Sources	7,899,212	8,767,988	868,776	13,840,315
	<u>31,745,778</u>	<u>32,361,409</u>	<u>615,631</u>	<u>41,987,084</u>
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>				
Trusted Leadership & Relationships	9,179,096	10,996,117	1,817,021	16,566,669
Strong Communities	1,612,365	1,705,813	93,448	2,336,286
Vibrant Places and Spaces	2,254,845	2,822,742	567,897	4,110,893
Sustainable Development and Public Safety	1,632,367	1,757,467	125,100	2,648,233
Resilient Infrastructure: Land Transport	9,159,400	7,807,683	-1,351,717	11,993,158
Resilient Infrastructure: Water Supply	1,988,411	2,246,201	257,790	3,307,131
Resilient Infrastructure: Wastewater	906,983	967,950	60,967	1,440,398
Resilient Infrastructure: Stormwater	274,706	294,968	20,262	424,520
Resilient Infrastructure: Flood Protection	454,576	501,942	47,366	648,248
Responsible Waste Management	481,821	493,450	11,629	746,190
	<u>27,944,570</u>	<u>29,594,333</u>	<u>1,649,763</u>	<u>44,221,726</u>
<b>Funding Required</b>				
Capital Renewals	4,499,235	7,284,408	2,785,173	9,863,424
Capital Growth	55,026	374,087	319,061	424,103
Capital Level of Service	259,706	458,328	198,622	495,000
Loans Repaid	676,632	747,208	70,576	1,120,898
	<u>5,490,599</u>	<u>8,864,031</u>	<u>3,373,432</u>	<u>11,903,425</u>
<b>Funding Applied</b>				
Funding from Depreciation Reserves	0	0	0	4,281,948
Loans Raised	0	0	0	2,660,456
Capital Income	132,315	204,200	71,885	112,200
Transfer to and from Balance	1,557,076	5,892,755	4,335,679	7,083,463
	<u>1,689,392</u>	<u>6,096,955</u>	<u>4,407,563</u>	<u>14,138,067</u>

- 4.4. In the Combined Cost of Services statement, overall operating revenue is \$616k under budget. This relates mostly to other general sources, which relates to internal overhead charges between departments. This is offset by the increased Activity Revenue as a result of increased subsidy received from NZTA.
- 4.5. Operating expenditure is \$1.65M under budget, with this being spread across all budget areas. This is due to the timing of budgets and associated projects. This is offset by increased spending on Land Transport due to the July and October weather events.
- 4.6. Capital expenditure and loan repayments were under budget by \$3.37M. This is due to the timing of some of the carryover items, as well as the timing of spending on existing current year budgets.

**Statement of Cashflows  
For the Period Ending February 2026**

	Actual	Full Year Budget
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Receipts from rates revenue	15,984,609	19,148,250
Receipts from other revenue	6,112,688	9,093,678
Interest received	31,768	87,381
Dividends received	20,832	8,000
Payments to suppliers and employees	(17,167,402)	(21,840,769)
Interest paid	(125,836)	(281,489)
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) Operating Activities</b>	<b>4,856,659</b>	<b>6,215,051</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Proceeds from Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment	132,435	112,345
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(3,883,007)	(11,495,728)
Purchase of investments	(494,790)	-
Purchase of intangible assets	(441,354)	(71,386)
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) Investing Activities</b>	<b>(4,686,716)</b>	<b>(11,454,769)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Proceeds from borrowings	3,000,000	3,225,000
Prepayment of borrowings	-	-
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) Financing Activities</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>3,225,000</b>
Net (Decrease)/increase in cash, cash equivalents and bank overdrafts	3,169,943	(2,014,718)
Cash, cash equivalents and bank overdrafts at the beginning of the year	1,217,480	3,170,000
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	4,387,423	1,155,282

- 4.7. The cashflow statement shows the cashflows in and out for the period to 28 February 2026. As can be seen, net cashflow from operating activities has been money coming in, due the second rates instalment being due in February 26.
- 4.8. Cashflows from investing activities shows the amount spent on capital expenditure to the end of February. This is only cash spent this year and excludes items like work in progress carried over from prior years, which is why there is a difference between the figure here and in the cost-of-service statement above.
- 4.9. Cash flows from financing activities shows the borrowings and repayments made to external loans as well as transfers between reserve accounts.

**Current Debt Profile**

- 4.10. Current LGFA borrowing at the end of February has the following maturity profile. This is higher than was what was projected in the Long Term Plan.
- 4.11. This increase is due to Council taking some borrowing to cover the funding of the reinstatement works for the storm damage from October. This is the \$3M which is due to mature on 27 May 2026. There will be subsidy received on this spending, but it was decided that borrowing the money at the front would help us complete the work without having to wait on the subsidy to be received.

4.12. Given the recent weather event, this borrowing that had been taken for the October storm damage event will be carried over to cover the initial costs of the February event until NZTA subsidy and insurance claims are progressed and received.

4.13. As you can see, interest rates being offered continue trending downwards.

Amount	Term	Maturity Date	Interest Rate
\$6,000,000	6 months	15 June 2026	2.735%
\$2,000,000	19 months	15 April 2026	4.50%
\$4,000,000	12 months	12 June 2026	3.37%
\$3,000,000	6 months	27 May 2026	2.63%

## Councillor updates

## Ngā kōrero hou a ngā Kaikaunihera

All councillors will be invited by the Chairperson to provide a verbal update on meetings attended on behalf of Ōtorohanga District Council.

## Resolution Register

## Rēhita tatūnga

Previous resolutions of Ōtorohanga District Council which are not yet finalised are outlined below.

#	Date	Resolution	Staff update
C22	09/12/25	<p><b>Item 15 – Ōtorohanga Dog Agility Course</b></p> <p>That Ōtorohanga District Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APPROVE the construction of the Dog Agility Course on Waipā Esplanade.</li> <li>APPROVE the recommendation from the Ōtorohanga Community Board to increase funding of an additional \$500 per year to the Ōtorohanga Parks and Reserves operating budget to maintain these additional assets.</li> <li>APPROVE the recommendation from the Ōtorohanga Community Board for the addition of the Dog Agility Equipment to the Council asset base and included in the annual depreciation calculations, currently estimated at \$2,500 per annum.</li> </ol>	<p>Project Team are working with potential funding partners/sponsors.</p> <p>Staff recommend this Resolution remain on the Register.</p>
C25	09/12/25	<p><b>Item 18 – Ōtorohanga Historical Society – Rewarewa Schoolhouse Relocation and Funding</b></p> <p>That the Ōtorohanga District Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RESOLVES to partially fund the regulatory costs by not charging for staff time, Council fees, or Independent Hearing Commissioner Costs relating to the building consent assessed at \$2,750 and resource consent (estimated at \$5,000 if resource consent is required); and,</li> <li>APPROVES the replacement of the existing stormwater pipe in its current location as soon as practically possible; and,</li> <li>ACCEPTS that this project will be funded from budgets as approved in the 2024-27 Long Term Plan; and,</li> <li>ACCEPTS that this project will take place as soon as practically possible and may delay the relocation of the Rewarewa Schoolhouse.</li> </ol>	<p>Staff are working with geotech engineers and OHS to coordinate the project. Both ODC and OHS Project Managers are progressing this project.</p> <p>Staff recommend this Resolution remain on the Register.</p>
C34	24/02/26	<p><b>Item 22 - Report on the Proposed Road Name (Fern Lane) adjacent to 60 Kiokio Station Road, Ōtorohanga</b></p> <p>That Ōtorohanga District Council APPROVE Fern Lane as the name of the new right of way adjacent to 60 Kiokio Station Road, Ōtorohanga.</p>	<p>No further action is required. This is now an operational matter.</p> <p>Staff recommend this Resolution is <b>REMOVED</b> from the Register.</p>

C35	24/02/26	<p><b>Item 23 - Application for Temporary Road Closures – ANZAC Day 2026 (Ōtorohanga &amp; Kāwhia)</b></p> <p>That Ōtorohanga District Council:</p> <p>a) APPROVE the Temporary Road Closures, in accordance with Sections 319(h) and 342, and Section 11 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974, of Maniapoto Street SH 3 (from SH31/3 to intersection of Huiputea Drive), Kakamutu Road (from SH3 to Turongo Street), Gradara Avenue (from Kakamutu Street to Summit Drive), in Ōtorohanga on 25 April 2026 between 4.00am and 1.00pm. Noting this will also affect traffic on SH3, SH31, Turongo Street, Kakamutu Road, Tuhoro Street, Balance Street, Ranfurly Street, Huiputea Drive, Whittington Lane, Clarke Street, Wahanui Crescent, Gradara Avenue, Cowley Lane, Hunter Lane and Pine Street, and</p> <p>b) APPROVE the Temporary Road Closure, in accordance with Sections 319(h) and 342, and Section 11 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974, of Pouewe Street (from Jervois St intersection to past the Anglican church) in Kāwhia on 25 April 2026 between 12.00pm and 2.30pm. Note this allows traffic in and out of Kāwhia; and</p> <p>c) c. AUTHORISE public notification of the approved road closure before the event, as required by the Local Government Act 1974.</p>	<p>No further action is required. This is now an operational matter.</p> <p>Staff recommend this Resolution is <b>REMOVED</b> from the Register.</p>
C35	24/02/26	<p><b>Item 24 - Application for Temporary Road Closure – Ōtorohanga Fire Brigade 100-year event</b></p> <p>That the Ōtorohanga District Council:</p> <p>a) APPROVE the Temporary Road Closure for the Ōtorohanga Fire Brigade 100-year event, in accordance with Sections 319(h) and 342, and Section 11 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974, of Balance Street, on Saturday 7 March 2026 from 9.30am to 2.30pm.</p> <p>b) b. AUTHORISE public notification of the approved road closure before the event, as required by the Local Government Act 1974.</p>	<p>No further action is required. This is now an operational matter.</p> <p>Staff recommend this Resolution is <b>REMOVED</b> from the Register.</p>
C37	24/02/26	<p><b>Item 25 – Council Contribution to Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund</b></p> <p>That Ōtorohanga District Council APPROVES an amount of \$100,000 from the General Reserve Fund to the Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund established in response to the 14 February 2026 flooding event, on the proviso that any money unspent after six months will be returned to the General Reserve Fund.</p>	<p>No further action is required. This is now an operational matter.</p> <p>Staff recommend this Resolution is <b>REMOVED</b> from the Register.</p>

#### Staff recommendation

That Ōtorohanga District Council confirm the removal of Resolutions C34, C35, C36 and C37 from the Register.

#### Resolution made in a public excluded session

No Resolutions have been released.

**Public excluded**

**Take matatapu**

**DISCLAIMER:** The reports attached to this Open Agenda set out recommendations and suggested resolutions only. Those recommendations and suggested resolutions DO NOT represent Ōtorohanga District Council policy until such time as they might be adopted by formal resolution. This Open Agenda may be subject to amendment either by the addition or withdrawal of items contained therein.

**Item 34** Resolution to exclude the public for Item PE5

**To** Ōtorohanga District Council

**From** Kaia King, Manager Governance

**Type** **DECISION REPORT**

**Date** 31 March 2026



**1. Purpose | Te kaupapa**

1.1. To exclude the public from parts of the proceedings of the Ōtorohanga District Council meeting.

**2. Executive summary | Whakarāpopoto matua**

2.1. All formal meetings are open to the public; however, there are some parts of the meeting where the public can be excluded. ŌDC must provide a good reason if to exclude the public from a ŌDC or committee meeting - this also includes the media. A resolution must be made at a time when the meeting is open to the public stating the general subject of each matter, the reason for passing that resolution in relation to the matter, and the grounds on which the resolution is based.

**3. Staff recommendation | Tūtohutanga a ngā kaimahi**

That the Ōtorohanga District Council exclude the public from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting confirming:

- a) This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 7 of that Act where a risk of prejudice is minimised by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public; and
- b) The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded and the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution	Interest
Item PE5 - Chief Executive six-month performance review	Section 7(2)(a)	To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

## 4. Context | Horopaki

- 4.1. The Ōtorohanga District Council (ŌDC) is required under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) to conduct its meetings in a manner that is open and transparent to the public, except in circumstances where there is a justified reason to exclude the public. Section 48(1)(a) of LGOIMA permits the exclusion of the public from parts of a meeting to protect commercial interests, as specified in section 7(2)(b)(ii).
- 4.2. Public excluded agendas and minutes are not available to the public; however, ŌDC will release public information considered during the public excluded part of a meeting where possible. This approach ensures compliance with statutory obligations while balancing the principles of transparency and privacy.

## 5. Discussion | He kōrerorero

- 5.1. ŌDC must ensure that any decision to exclude the public is made transparently, with clear reference to the relevant legislative grounds. The process must also consider the potential for releasing non-sensitive information after the meeting, in line with ŌDC's commitment to openness. The decision aligns with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.

## 6. Strategic Considerations | Ngā whai whakaarotanga

### Significance and engagement

- 6.1. While the exclusion of the public is a procedural matter, it is important to ensure that the rationale for exclusion is clearly communicated and that any non-sensitive information is made available to the public as soon as practicable. This approach maintains public confidence in ŌDC's processes and aligns with the principles of transparency and accountability under the Local Government Act 2002.

### Mana whenua / Māori

- 6.2. ŌDC acknowledges its obligations to engage with mana whenua and Māori in decision-making processes. The subject matter of this report is procedural and does not require consultative or informative discussions with mana whenua/Māori.

### Strategic alignment

- 6.3. This decision supports ŌDC's strategic objectives by ensuring that governance processes are robust and compliant. The exclusion of the public in this context is consistent with best practice for managing commercial interests and upholds the integrity of ŌDC's risk and assurance functions.

### Legal

- 6.4. The recommendation is made in accordance with section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. The process also aligns with the decision-making provisions of the Local Government Act 2002.

**Financial**

6.5. There are no direct financial implications arising from the procedural decision to exclude the public.

**Risk analysis**

6.6. Excluding the public for this item mitigates the risk of breaching commercially sensitive information and ensures compliance with statutory requirements. There is a reputational risk if the exclusion is not clearly justified or communicated; however, this is mitigated by adherence to legislative requirements and ŌDC’s commitment to releasing non-sensitive information post-meeting.

**7. Options analysis | Tātari Kōwhiringa**

**Options summary of considerations**

	<b>Option 1: Exclude the public for the entire item</b>	<b>Option 2: Exclude the public for part of the item</b>	<b>Option 3: Do not exclude the public</b>
<b>Summary</b>	Full exclusion to protect privacy.	Partial exclusion, with some discussion in public.	All discussion held in public.
<b>Advantages</b>	Maximum protection and compliance with LGOIMA.	Balances transparency. Non-sensitive matters discussed publicly.	Maximum transparency.
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Limits public oversight; may be perceived as lacking transparency.  Reputational risk if perceived as overly secretive.	Risk of inadvertent disclosure of sensitive information.  Complexity in managing public/private split; potential for error.	Risk of breaching obligations; potential legal liability.  Legal and reputational risk.

**Recommended option and rationale**

7.1. Staff recommended Option 1: Exclude the public for the entire item. This approach provides the highest level of protection for matters under consideration, ensures full compliance with section 48(1)(a) of LGOIMA. While this limits immediate transparency, ŌDC can release non-sensitive information after the meeting, maintaining public trust and accountability.

**8. Appendices | Ngā āpiti hanga**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
There are no appendices.	

**Closing prayer/reflection/words of wisdom**

**Karakia/huritaō/whakataukī**

The Chairperson will invite a Member to provide the closing words and/or prayer/karakia.

**Meeting closure**

**Katinga o te hui**

The Chairperson will declare the meeting closed.

Workshops will commence following a short break.

## For use in both opening and closing meetings

A Member will provide the words of their preference or may choose to use the following:

Mā te whakapono	<i>By believing and trusting</i>
Mā te tūmanako	<i>By having faith and hope</i>
Mā te titiro	<i>By looking and searching</i>
Mā te whakarongo	<i>By listening and hearing</i>
Mā te mahi tahi	<i>By working and striving together</i>
Mā te manawanui	<i>By patience and perseverance</i>
Mā te aroha	<i>By all being done with compassion</i>
Ka taea e tātou	<i>We will succeed</i>

## For use in blessing food

A Member will provide the words of their preference or may choose to use the following:

Nau mai e ngā hua o te wao	<i>I welcome the gifts of food from the forest</i>
O te ngakinga	<i>From the cultivated gardens</i>
O te wai tai	<i>From the sea</i>
O te wai māori	<i>From the fresh waters</i>
Hei oranga mō tātou	<i>For the goodness of us all</i>
Tūturu whakamaui	<i>Let this be my commitment to all!</i>
Kia tina! Tina! Hui e! Tāiki e!	<i>Drawn together and affirmed!</i>